心の悲しみ

西司兄妹

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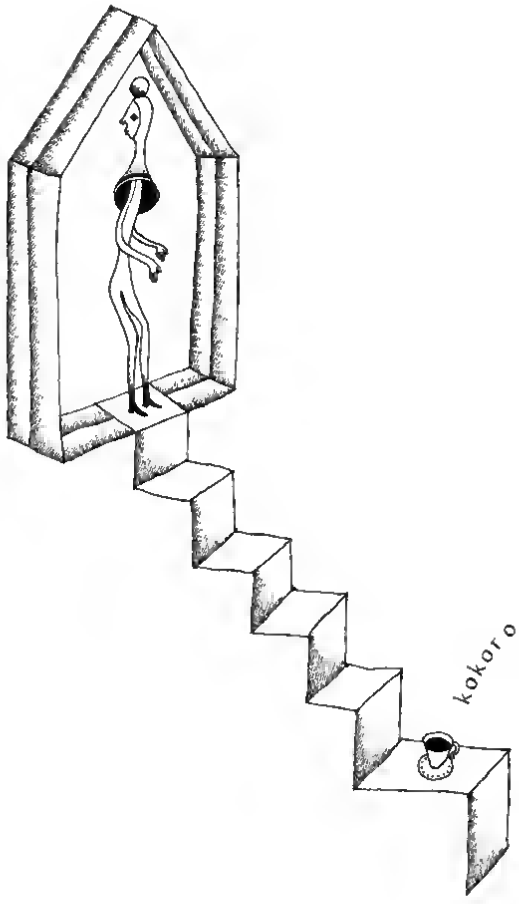
犬の悲しみ

西岡兄妹

Sadness of the Heart

Nishioka Brosis



kokoro no kanashimi

Seirinkogeisha

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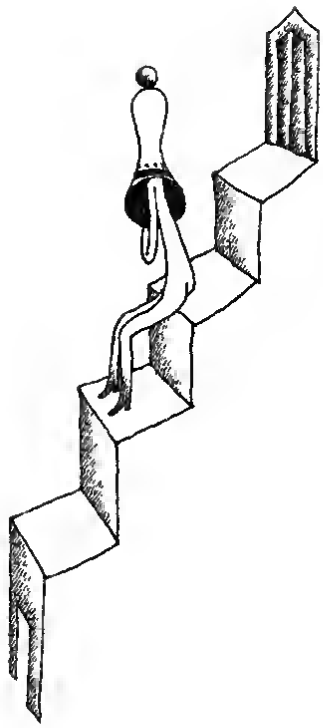
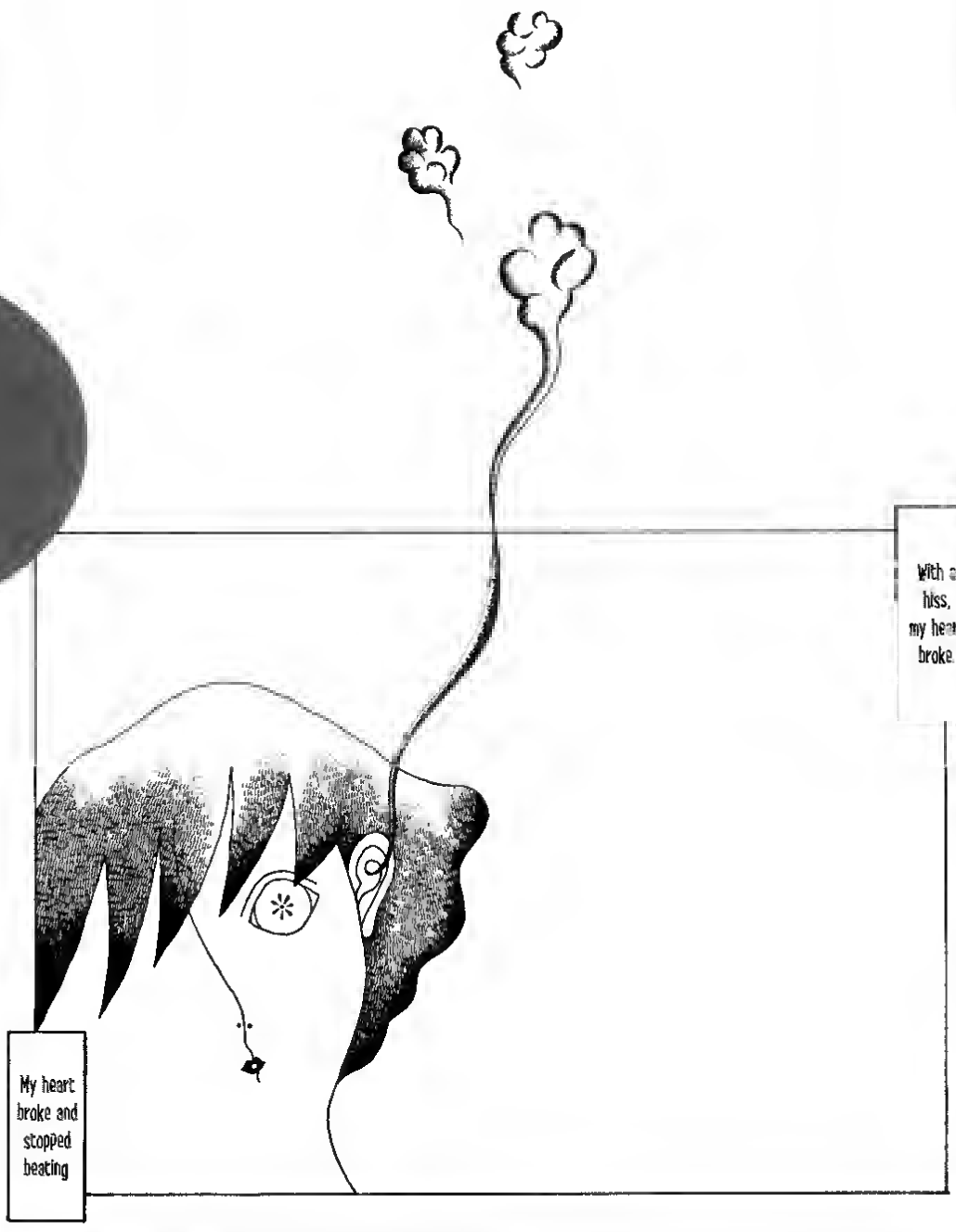
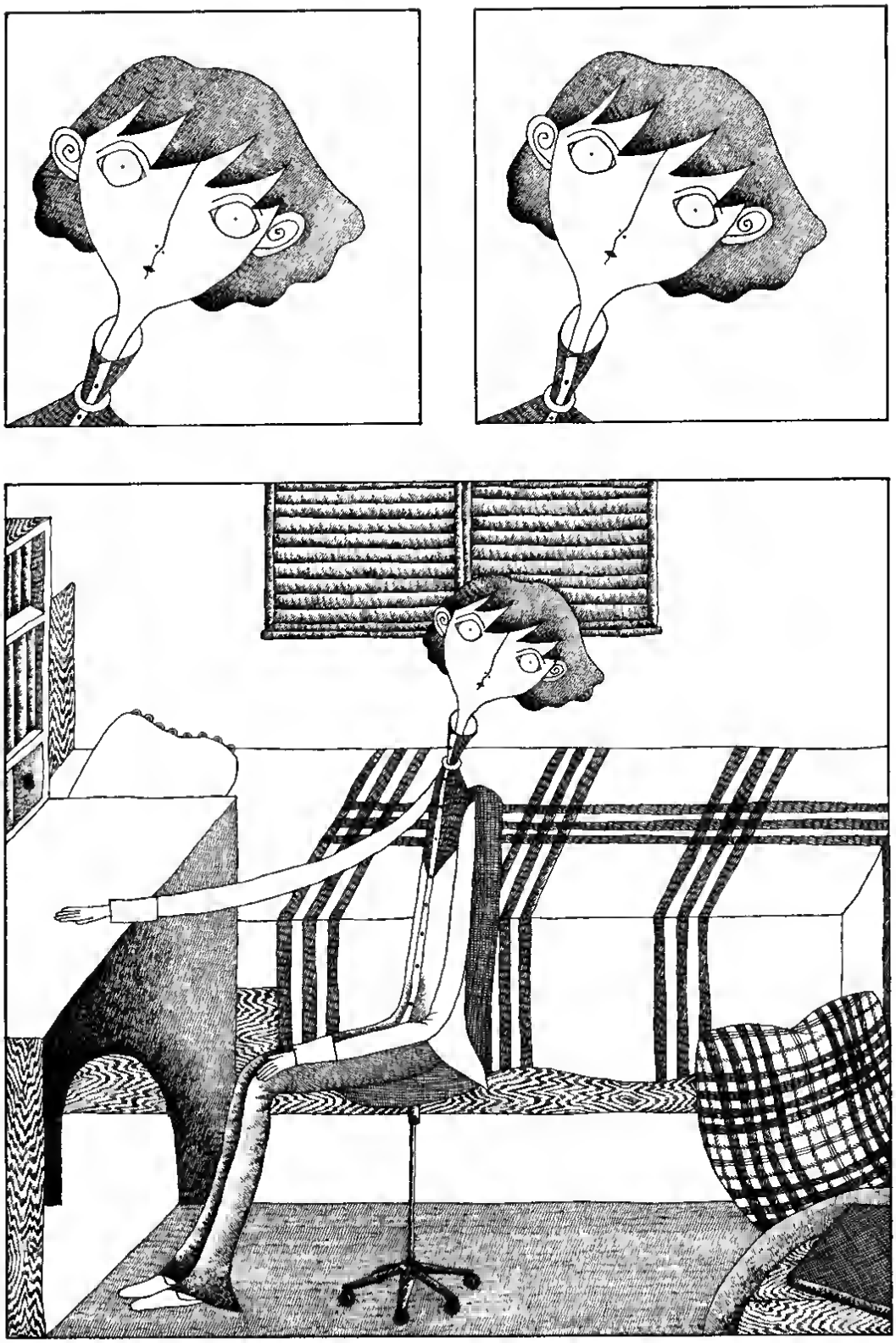
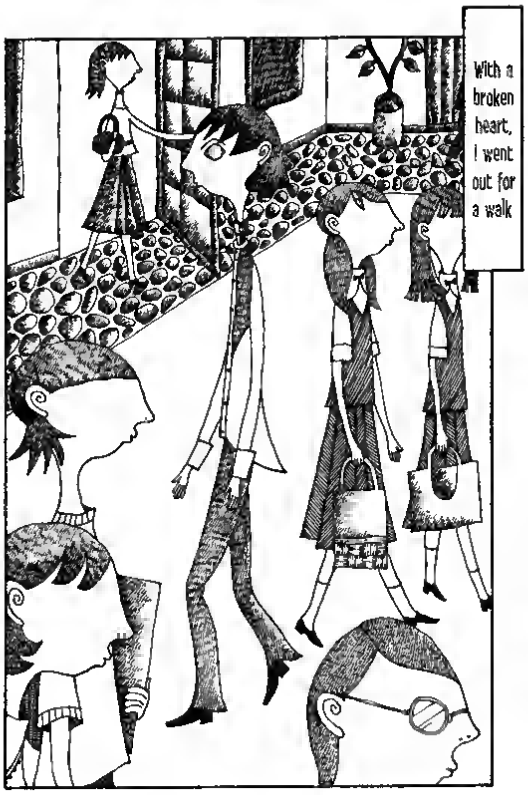


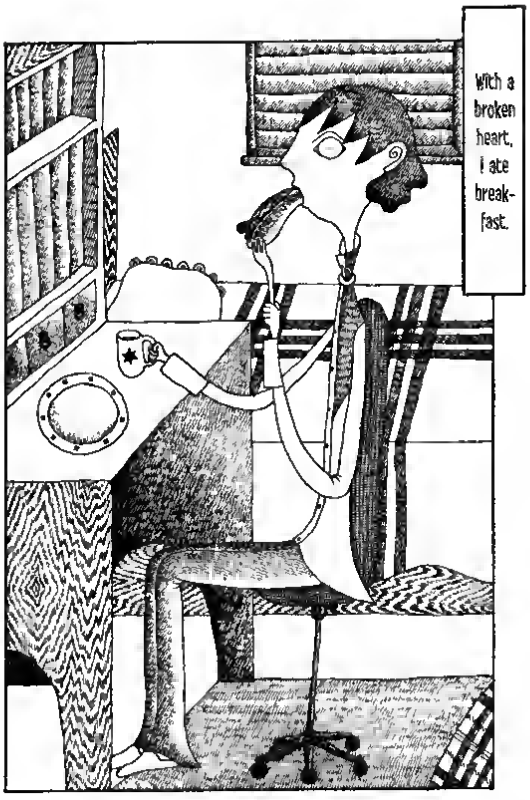
Translation
MEGCHAN
Lettering
NOMAD SOUL

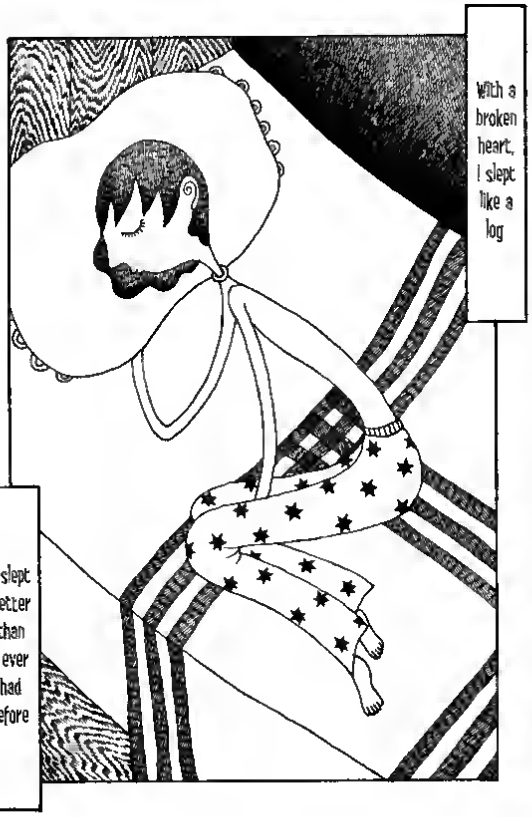
A Broken Heart

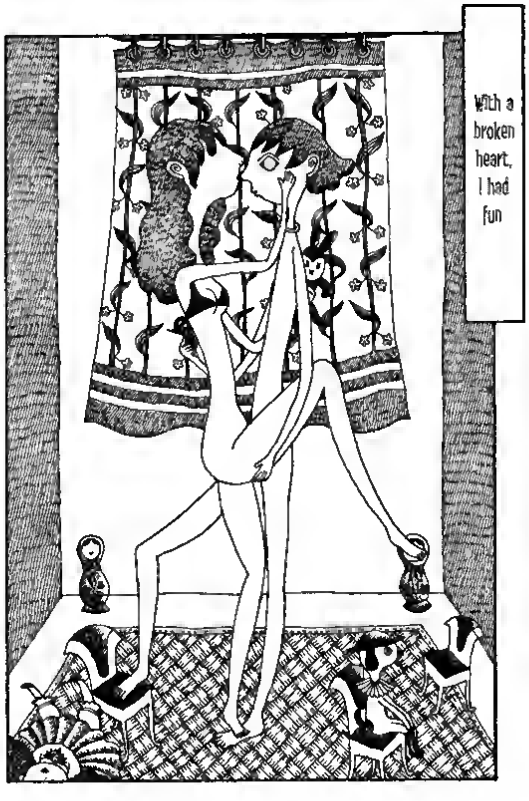


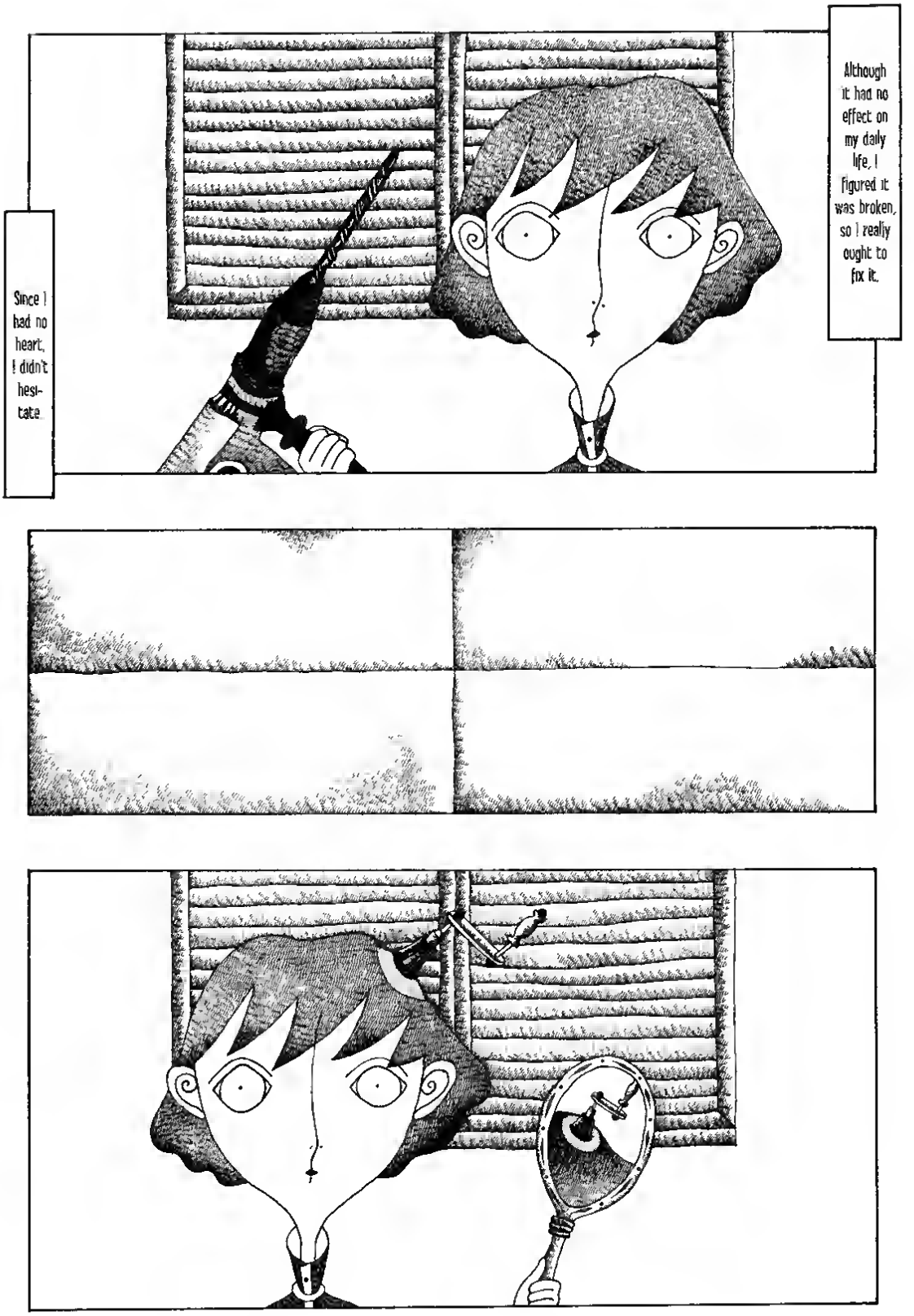


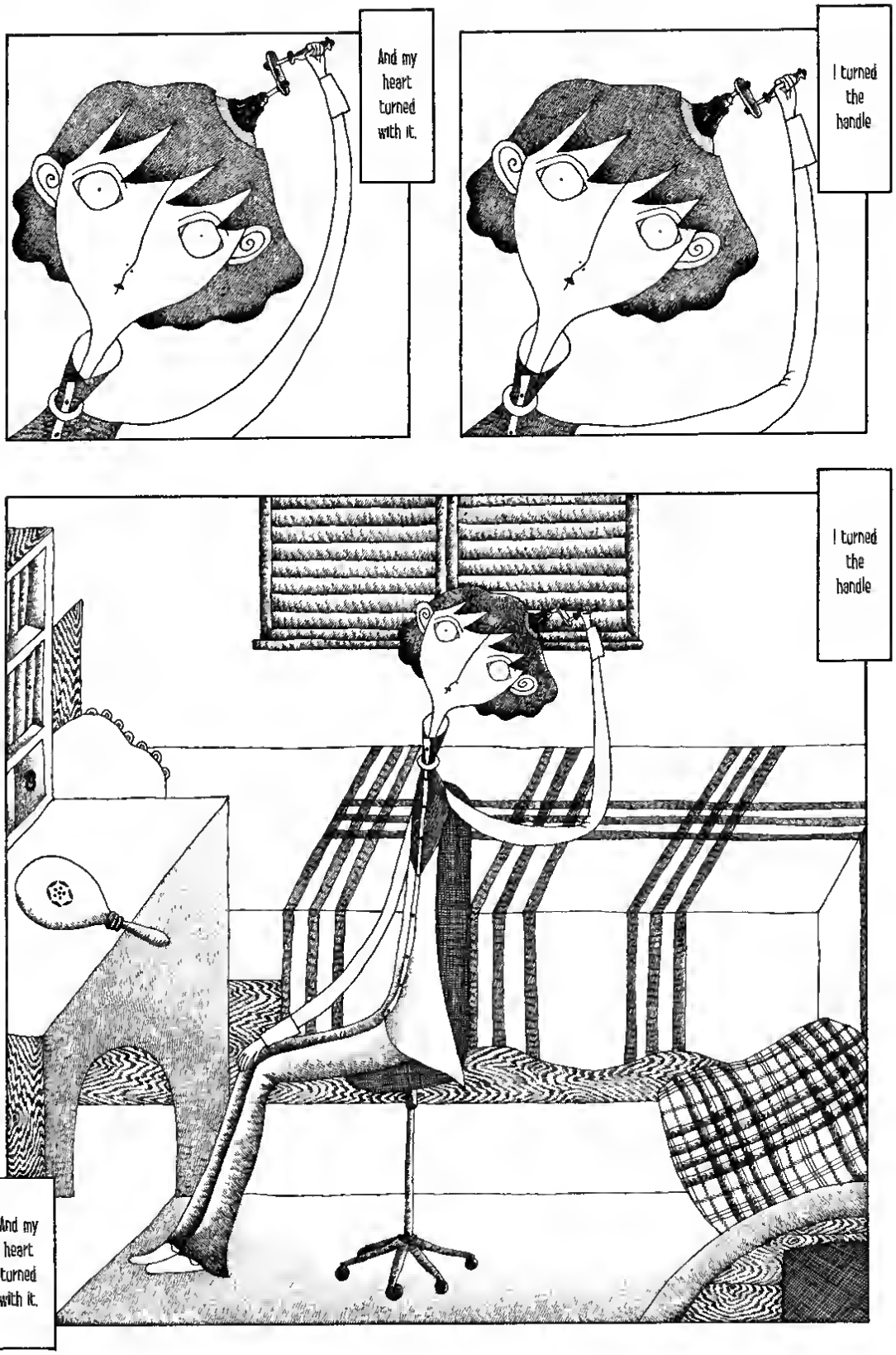

With a broken heart, I went out for a walk

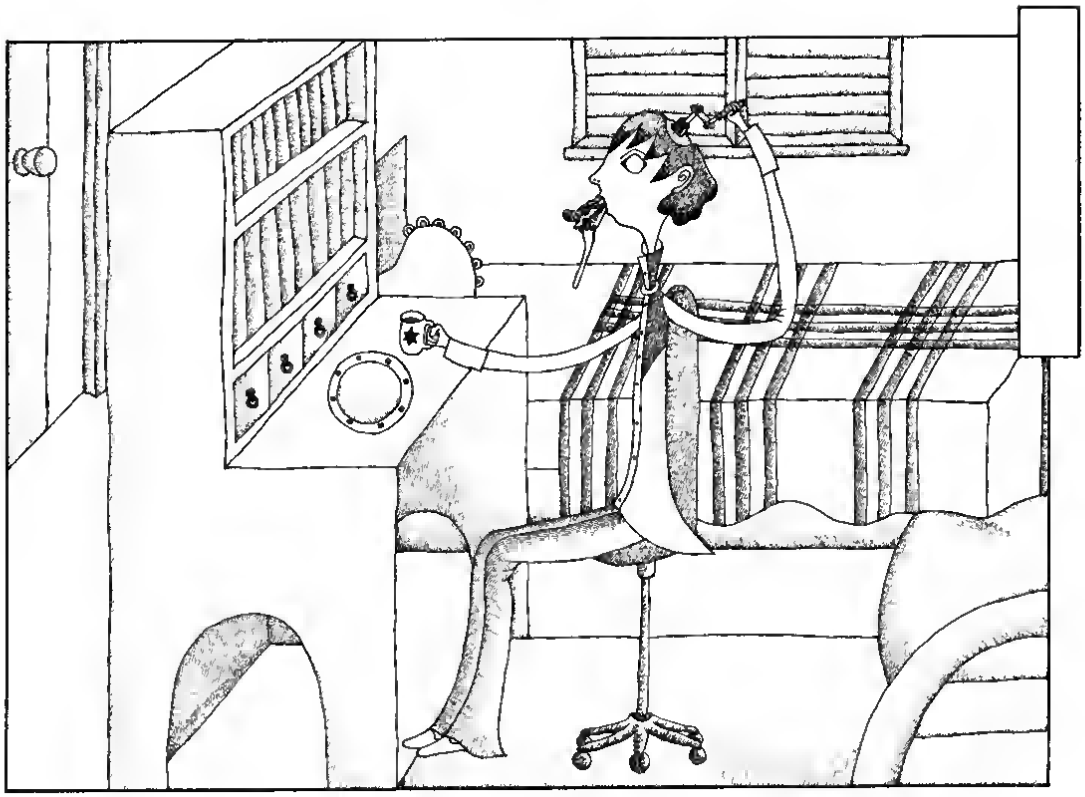

With a broken heart, I ate breakfast.

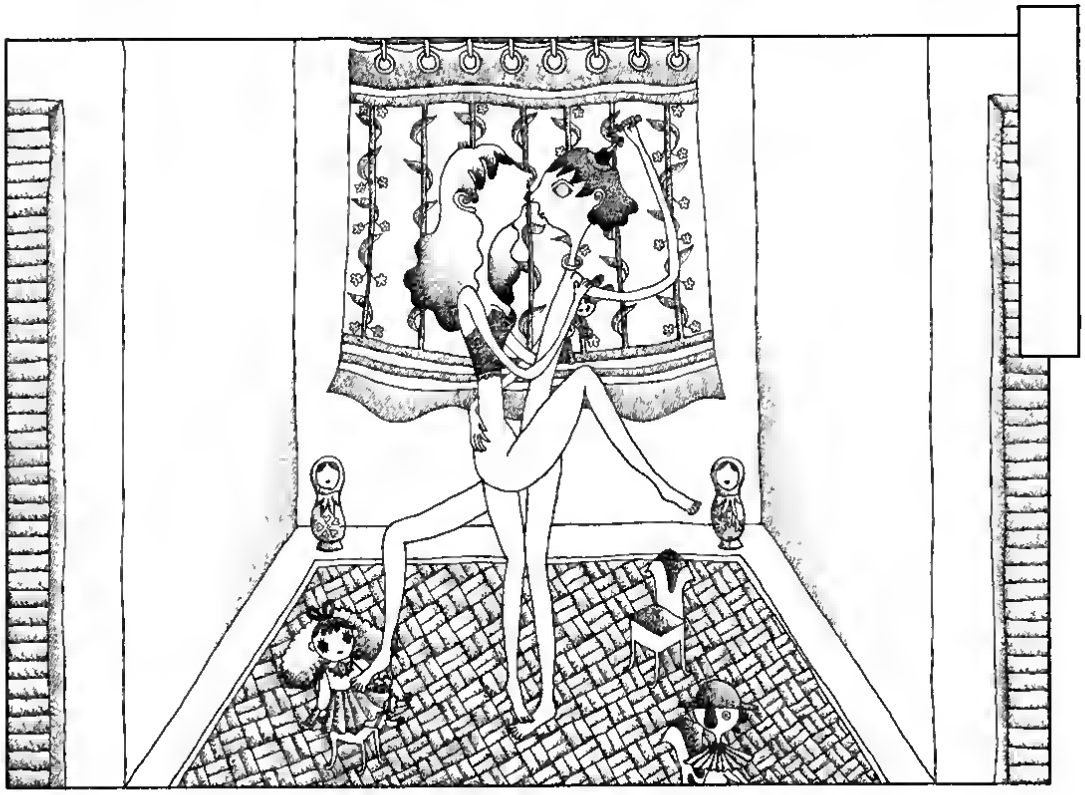

With a broken heart, I slept like a log
I slept better than I ever had before

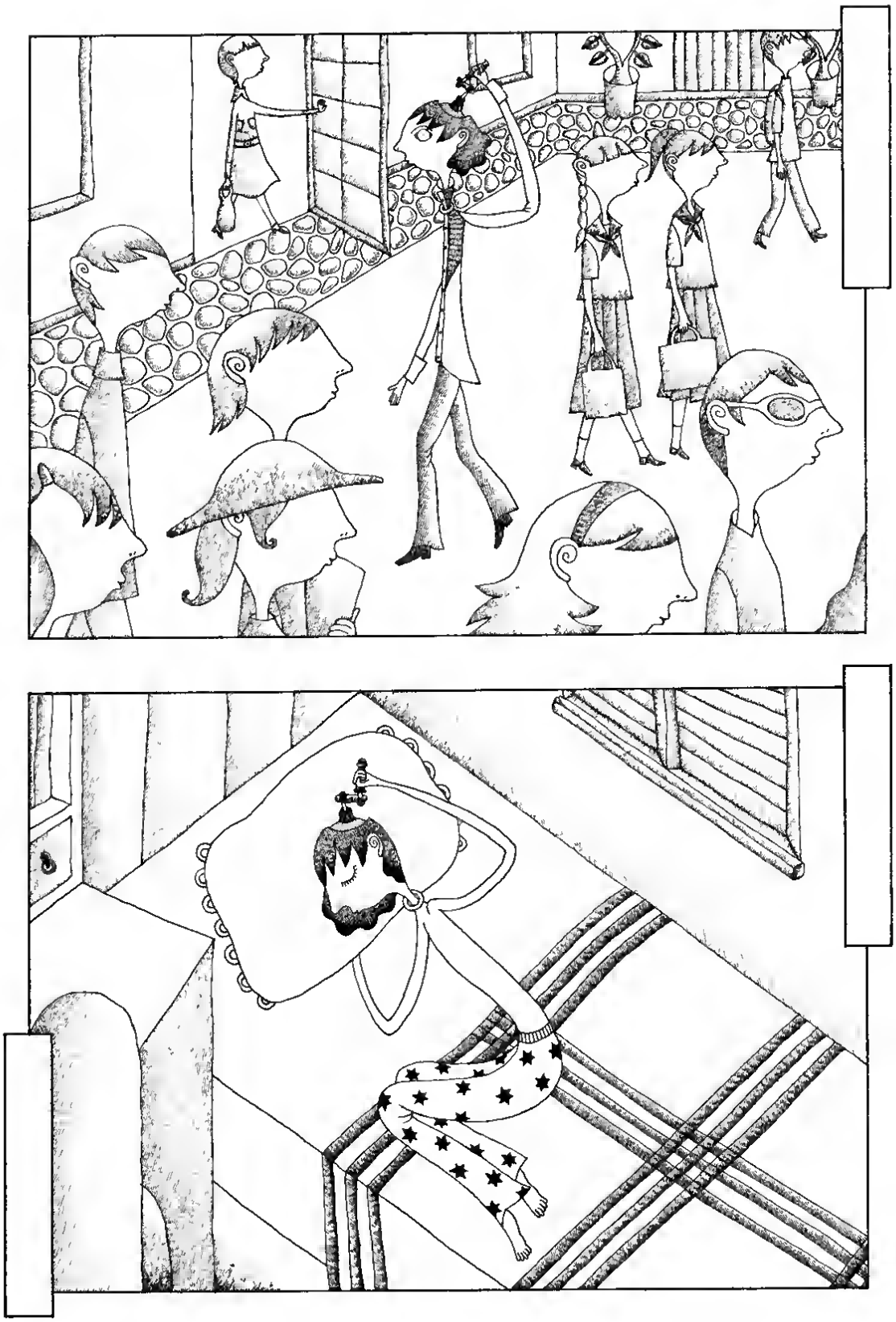

With a broken heart, I had fun

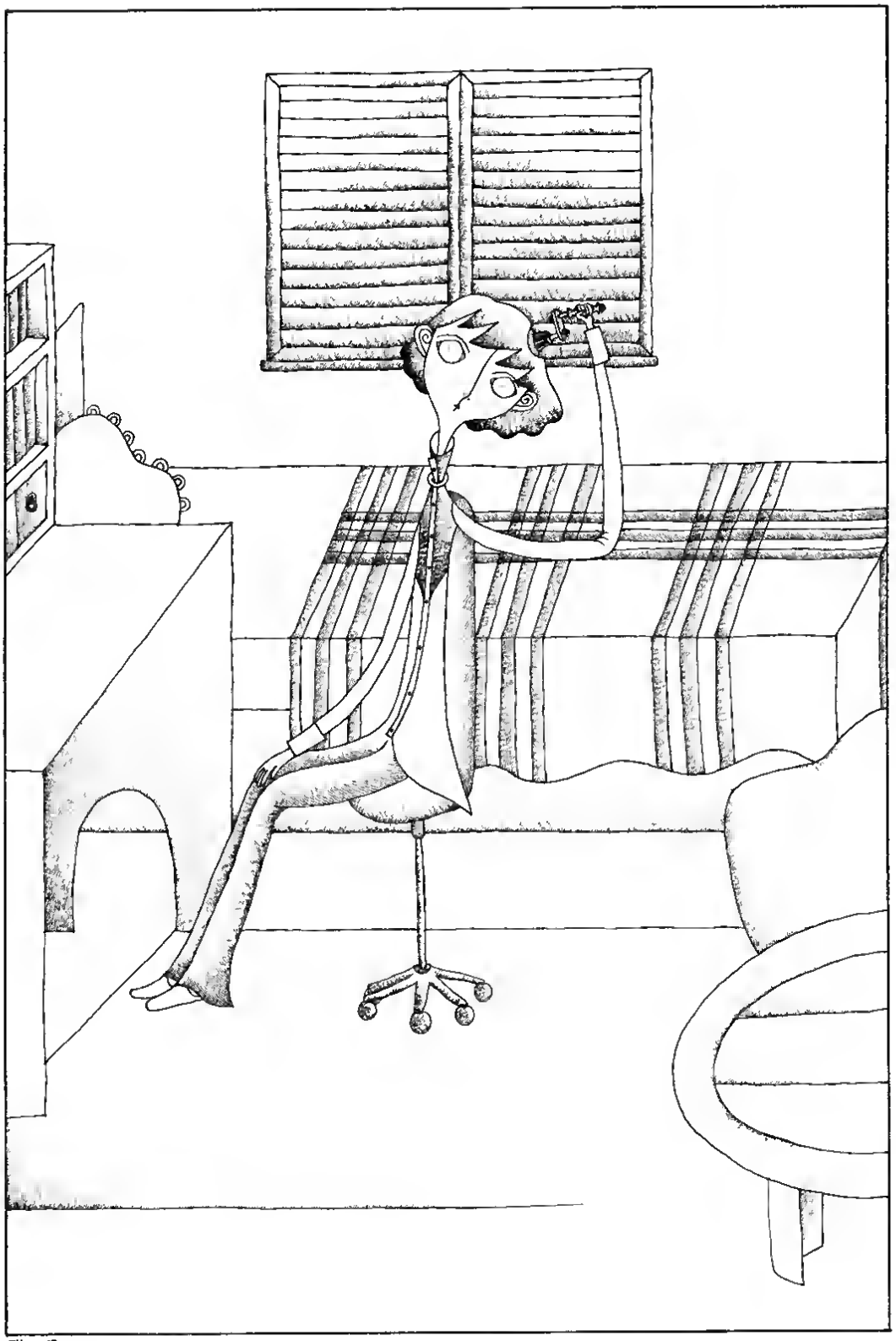

Since I had no heart, I didn't hesitate.
Although it had no effect on my daily life, I figured it was broken, so I really ought to fix it.


And my heart turned with it.
I turned the handle
I turned the handle
And my heart turned with it.



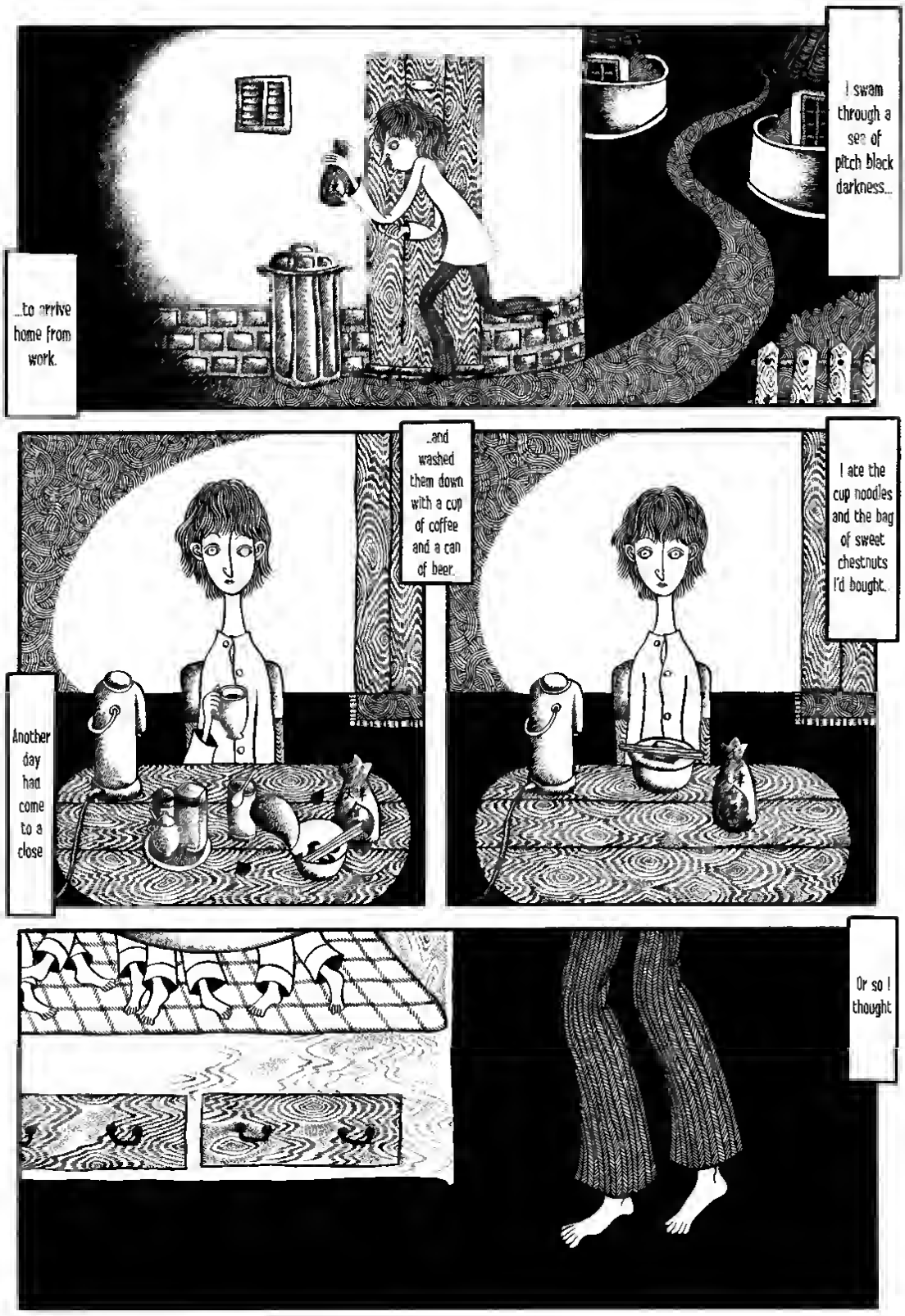


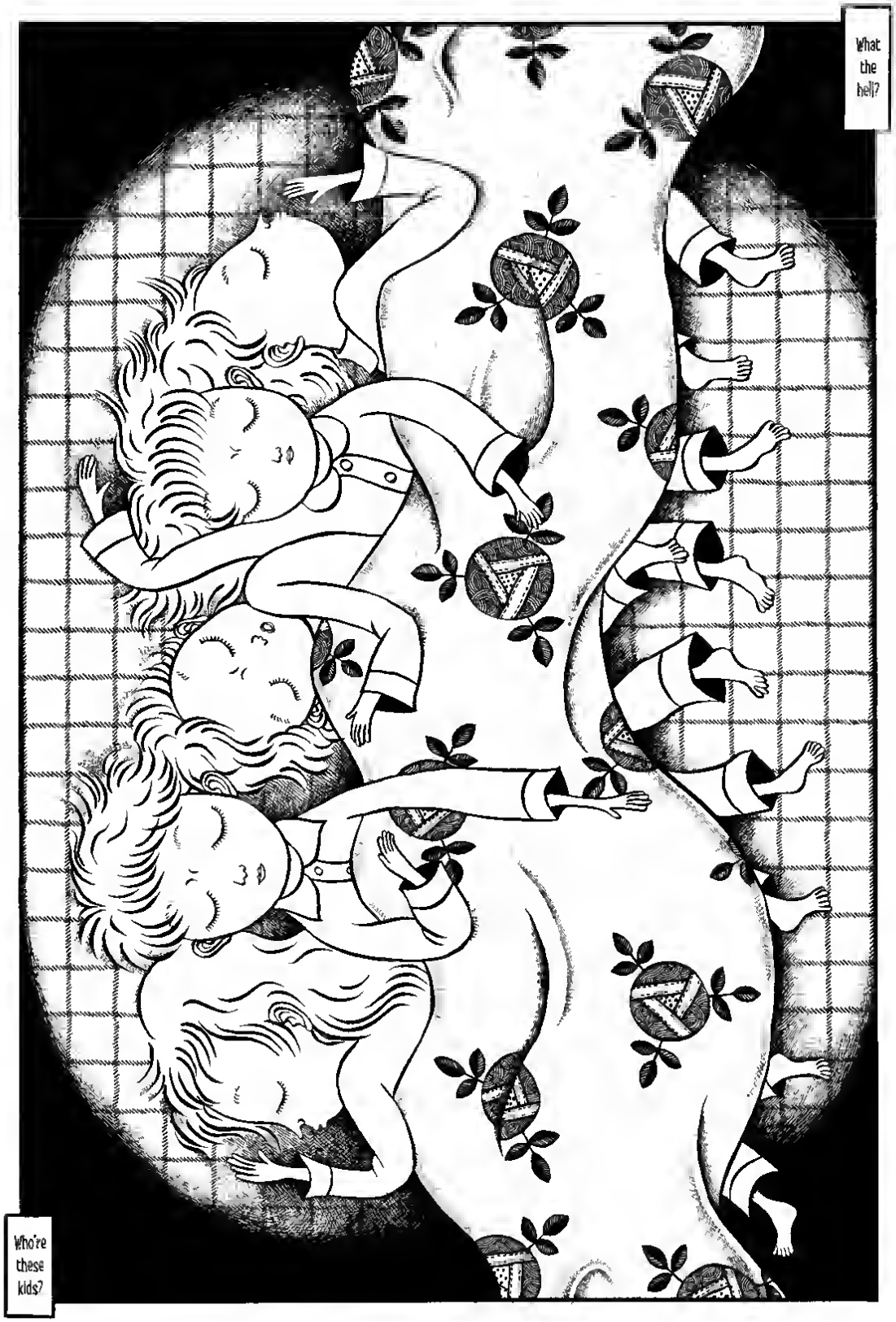




THE END

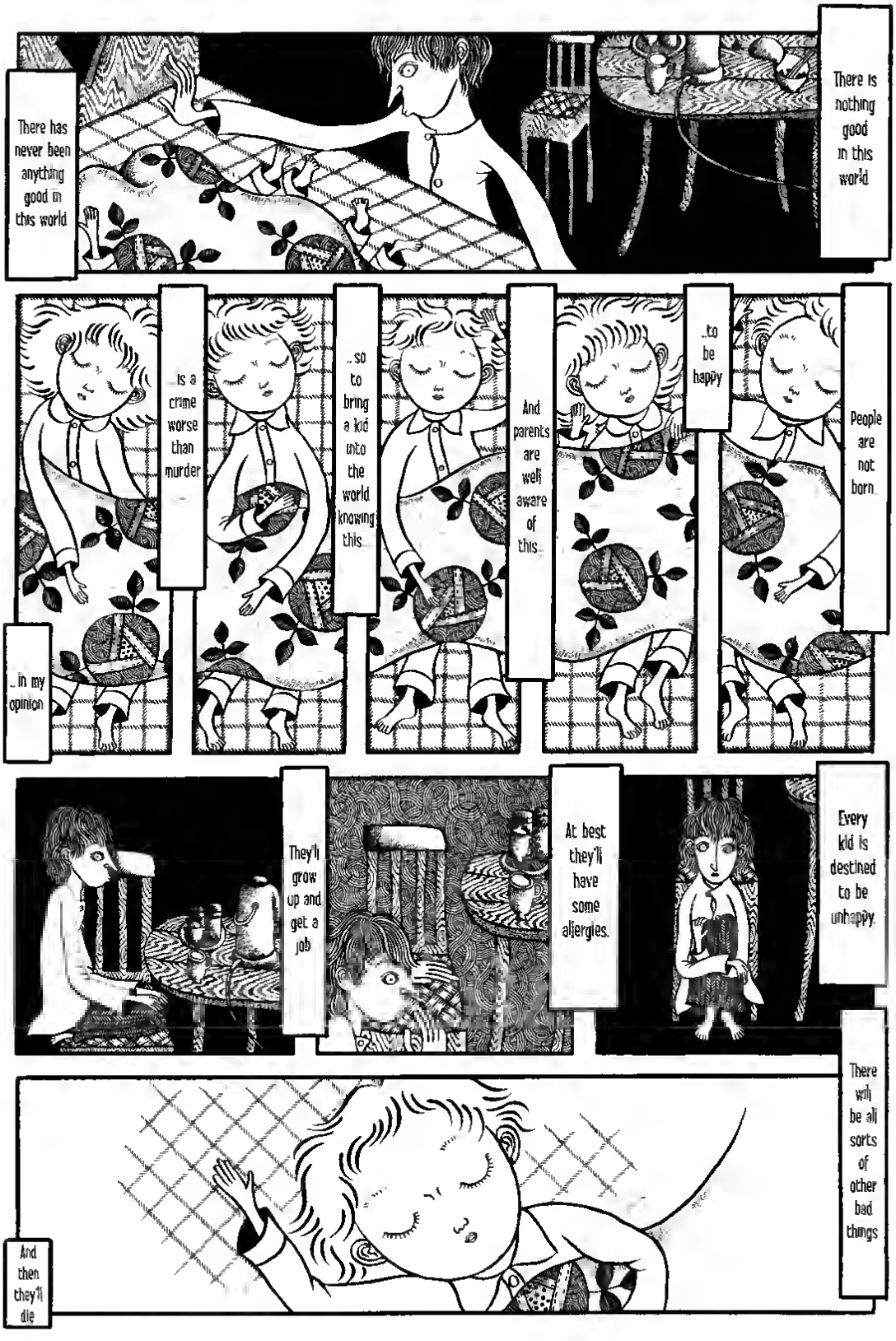
To My Children


I swam through a sea of pitch black darkness...
...to arrive home from work.
...and washed them down with a cup of coffee and a can of beer.
I ate the cup noodles and the bag of sweet chestnuts I'd bought.
Another day had come to a close
Or so I thought


What the hell?
Who're these kids?

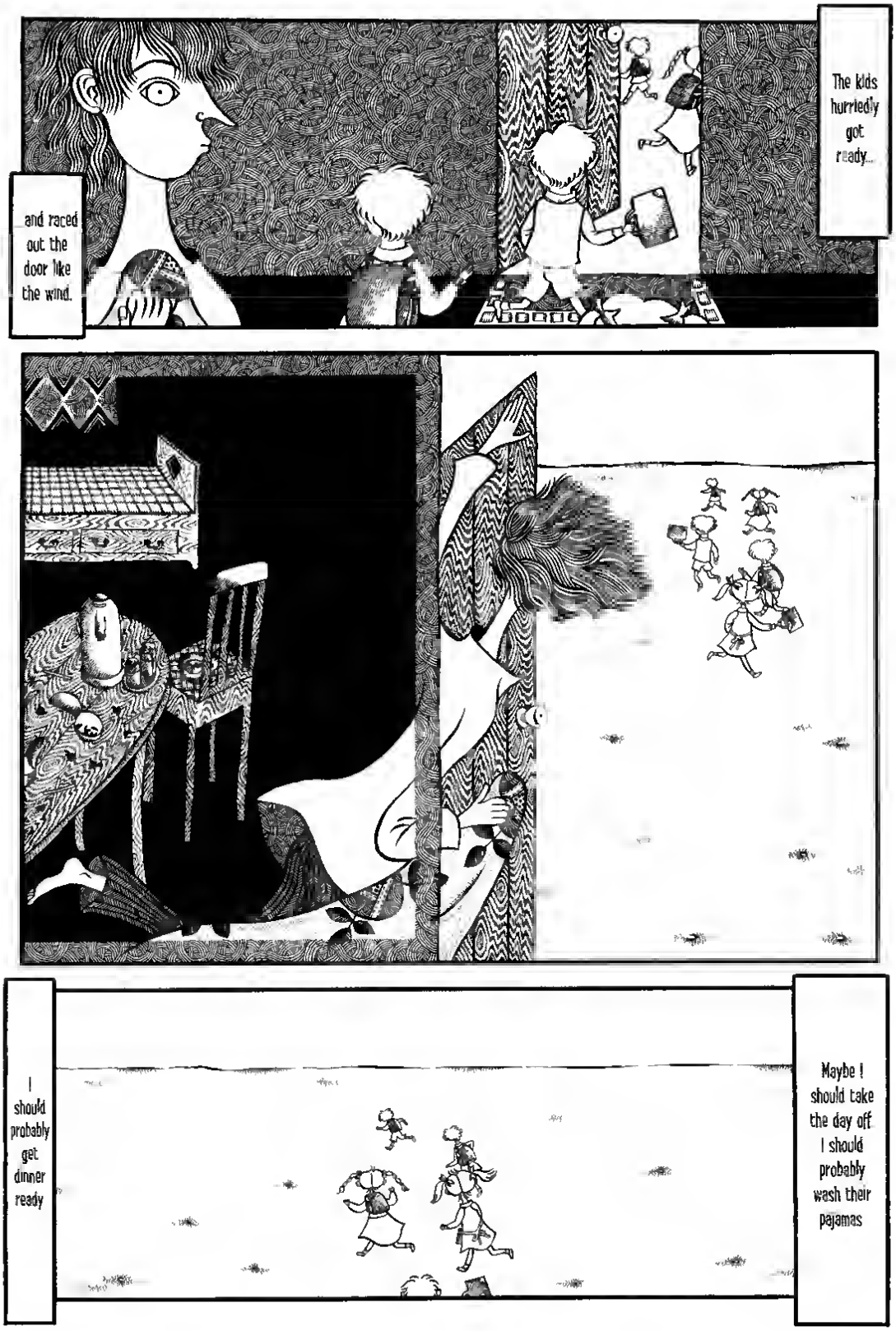
Now I can't sleep.
Who would do such an awful thing?
I'd rather have a dead cat or a pile of crap. At least then I could just throw it away and wash the sheets
Who on earth left them here? What kind of prank is this?
They're all horrid little brats.
I hate kids.

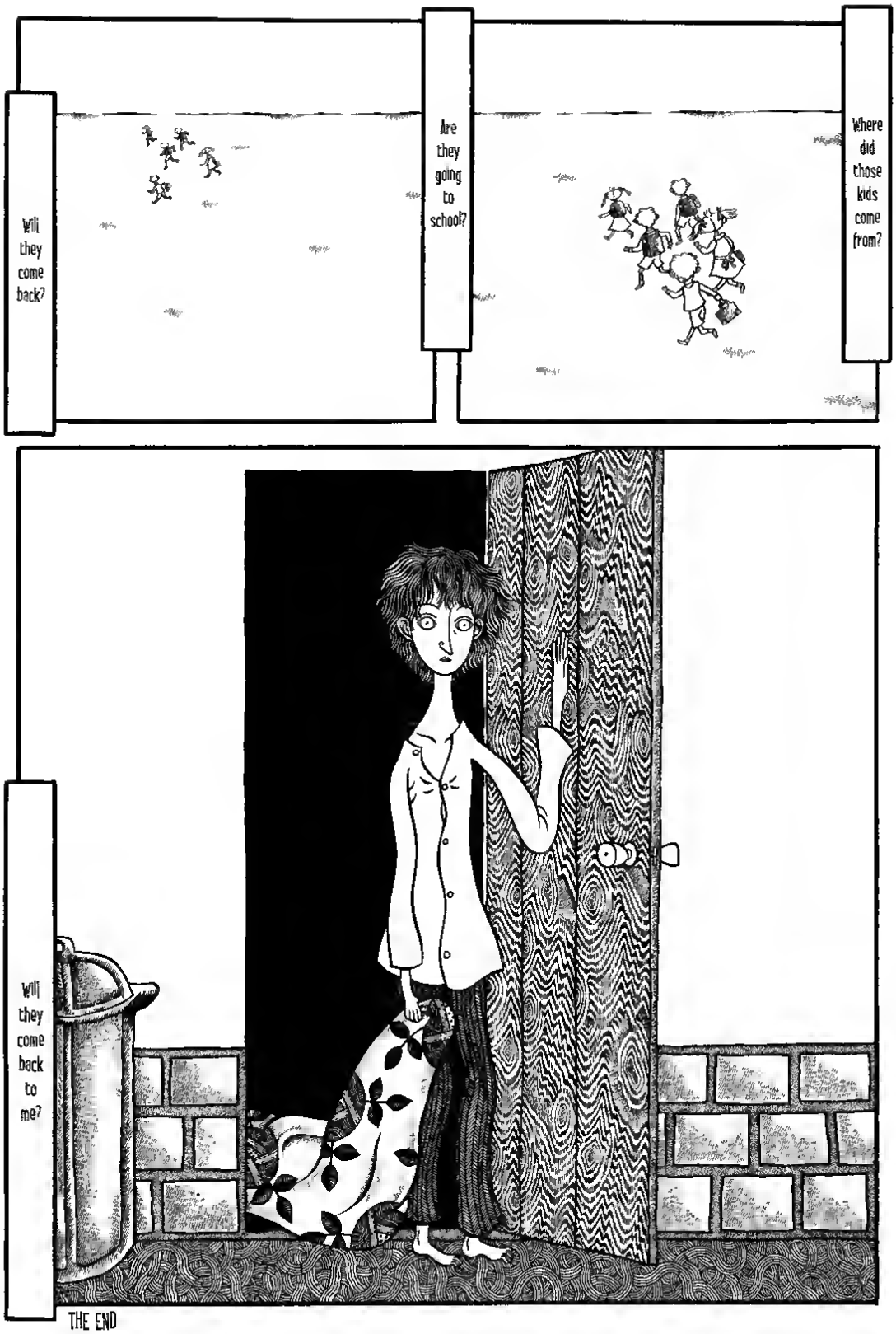
When I see kids, it makes me want to see their parents, to see their parents' parents.
It makes me want to go back three generations and warn them
That's how much I hate kids
I was born of parents foolish enough to want to bring a child into the world...
...so that's why I always think kids are so atrocious
And those atrocious kids are raised by those foolish parents...
...and go on to become parents themselves.
It really is a vicious circle.
A vicious circle that continues for generations.


There has never been anything good in this world
There is nothing good in this world
..in my opinion
..is a crime worse than murder
..so to bring a kid into the world knowing this
And parents are well aware of this
..to be happy
People are not born
And then they'll die
They'll grow up and get a job
At best they'll have some allergies.
Every kid is destined to be unhappy.
There will be all sorts of other bad things

Why are kids born?
And even if they can't help being born...
...why don't they commit suicide, why do they keep living if all they're going to do is have...
...kids of their own?
If kids had the knowledge and...
...courage and common sense of adults...
...half of them would commit suicide...
...before starting elementary school...
...and by the time they reached 6th grade ninety percent would have killed themselves.
...the only reason they don't is because they don't have any sense...
...and those same kids grow up to have kids of their own...
...and that's why the world never gets any better...
...and everyone is unhappy...
...and because everyone is unhappy...
...they make other people unhappy as well...
...but why would they do such a horrible thing like this...
...I can't sleep like this and I've got work tomorrow...
...who would do such a horrible prank anyway, I'd rather have a dead cat or a pile of crap...

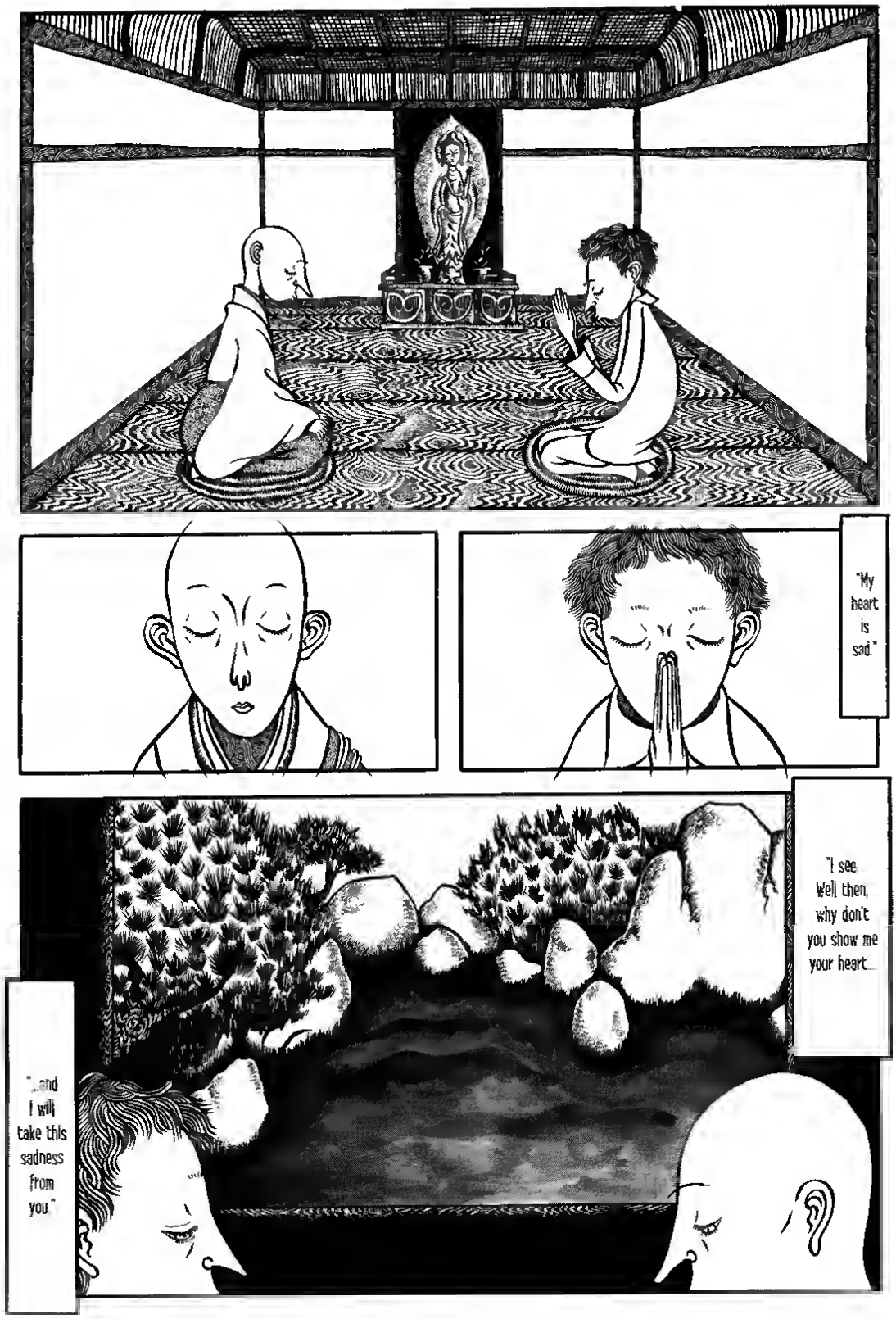
Next thing I knew, I'd fallen asleep.
When I woke up, the kids were eating my cup noodles
You shouldn't eat that sort of thing for breakfast and anyway those are my sweet chestnuts

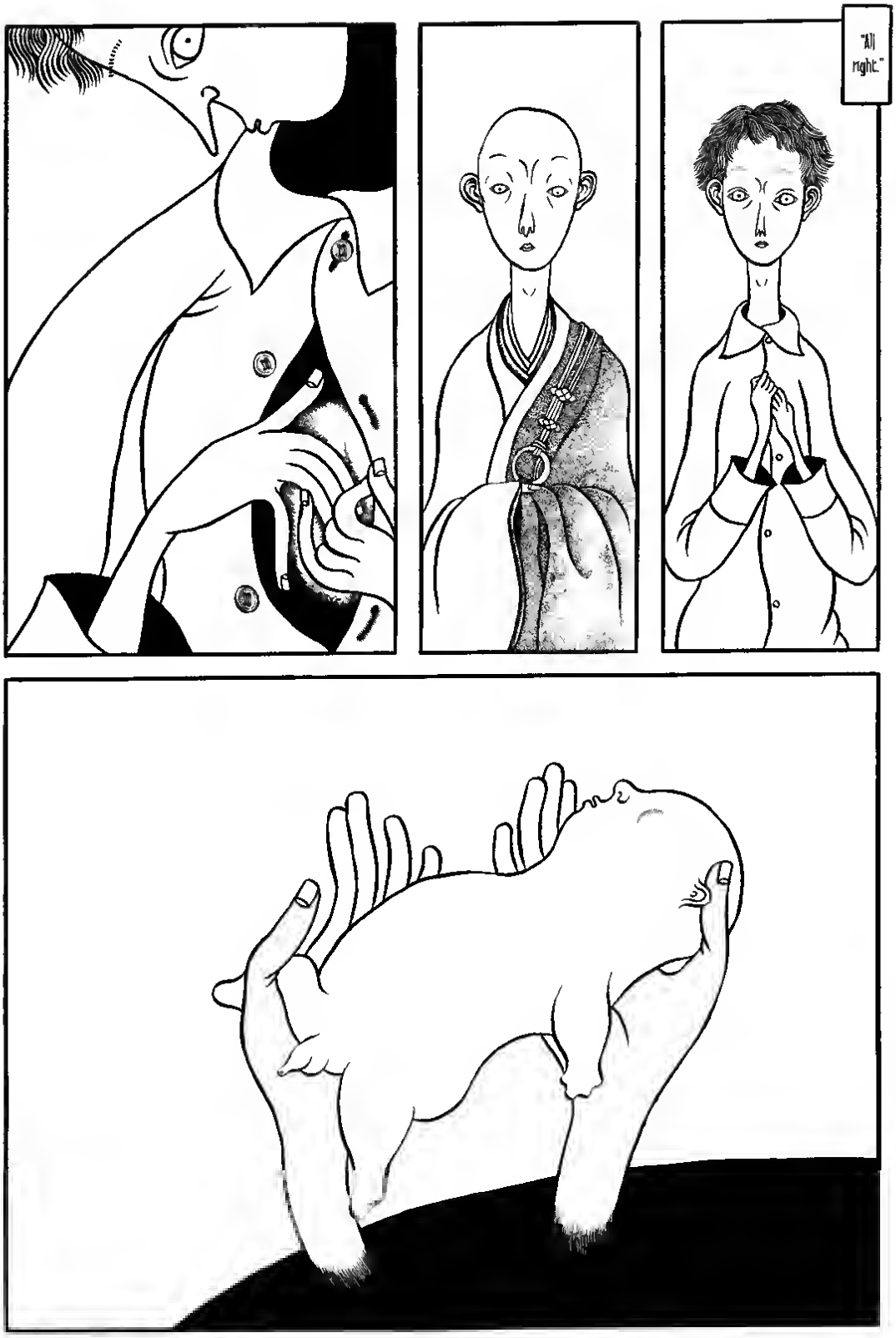

The kids hurriedly got ready...
and raced out the door like the wind.
Maybe I should take the day off. I should probably wash their pajamas
I should probably get dinner ready

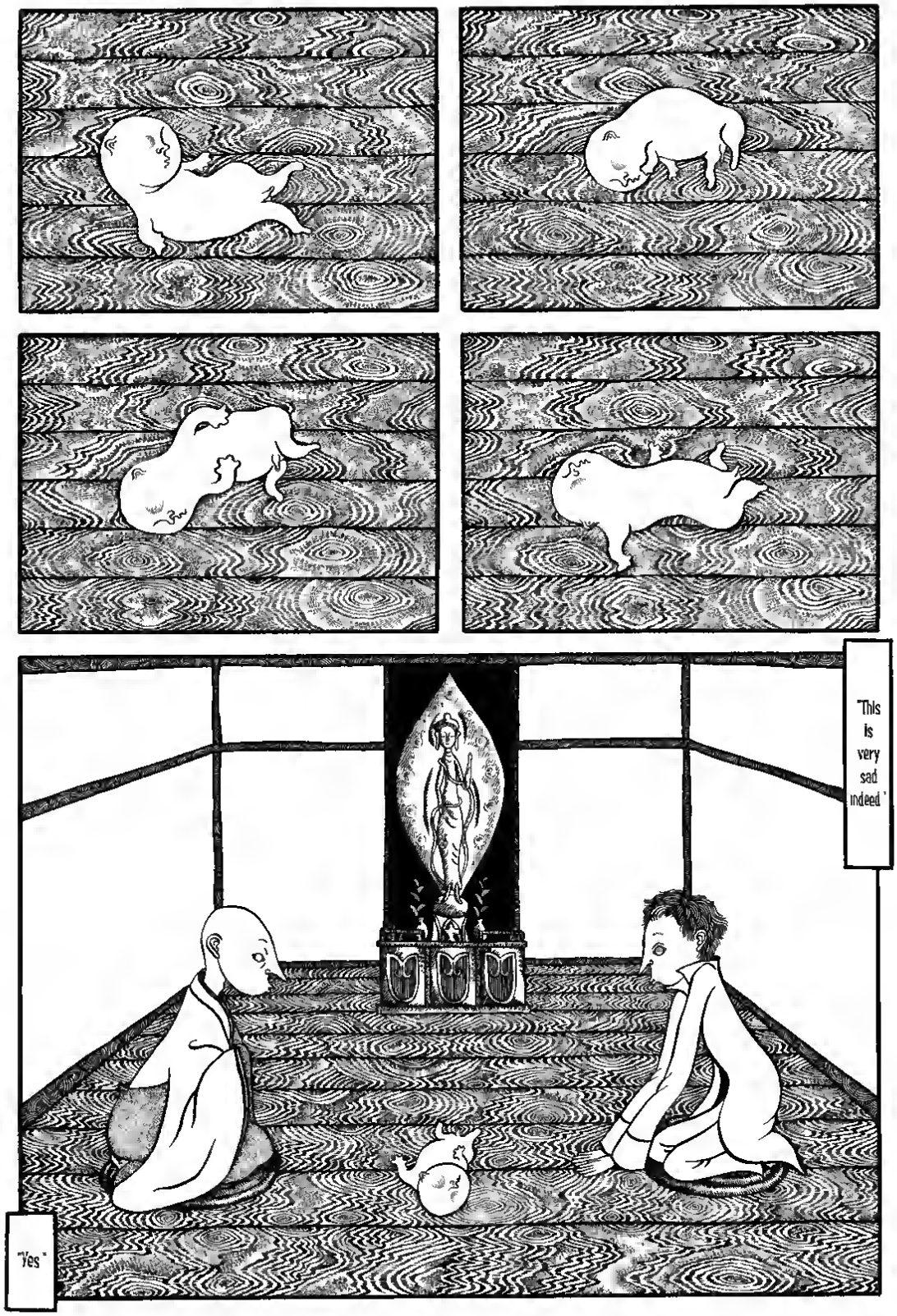

Will they come back?
Are they going to school?
Where did those kids come from?
Will they come back to me?
THE END

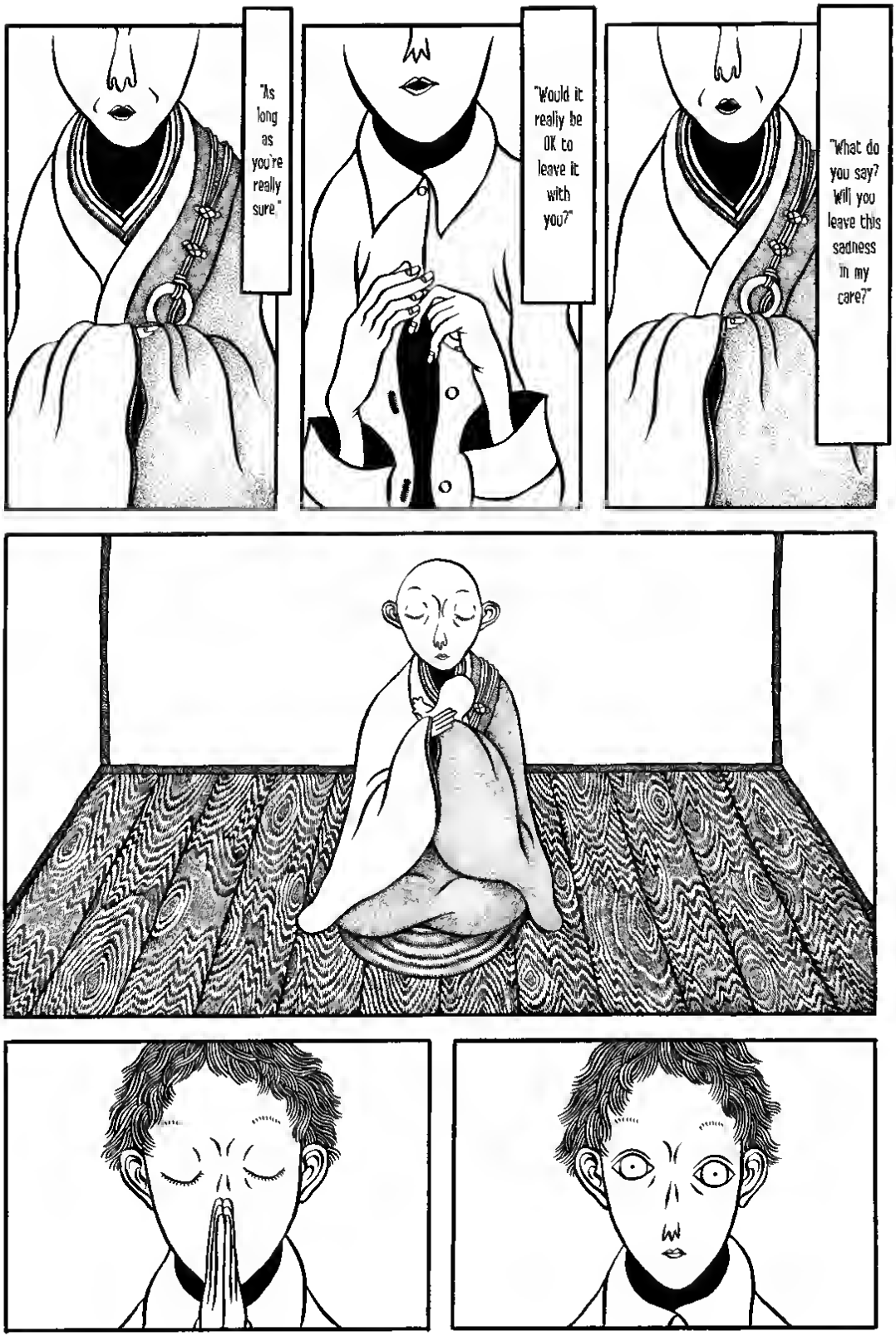
Sadness of the Heart

My heart was so, so, so
sad that I had no choice
but to consult a priest


"My heart is sad."
"I see. Well then, why don't you show me your heart..."
"...and I will take this sadness from you."


"All right."

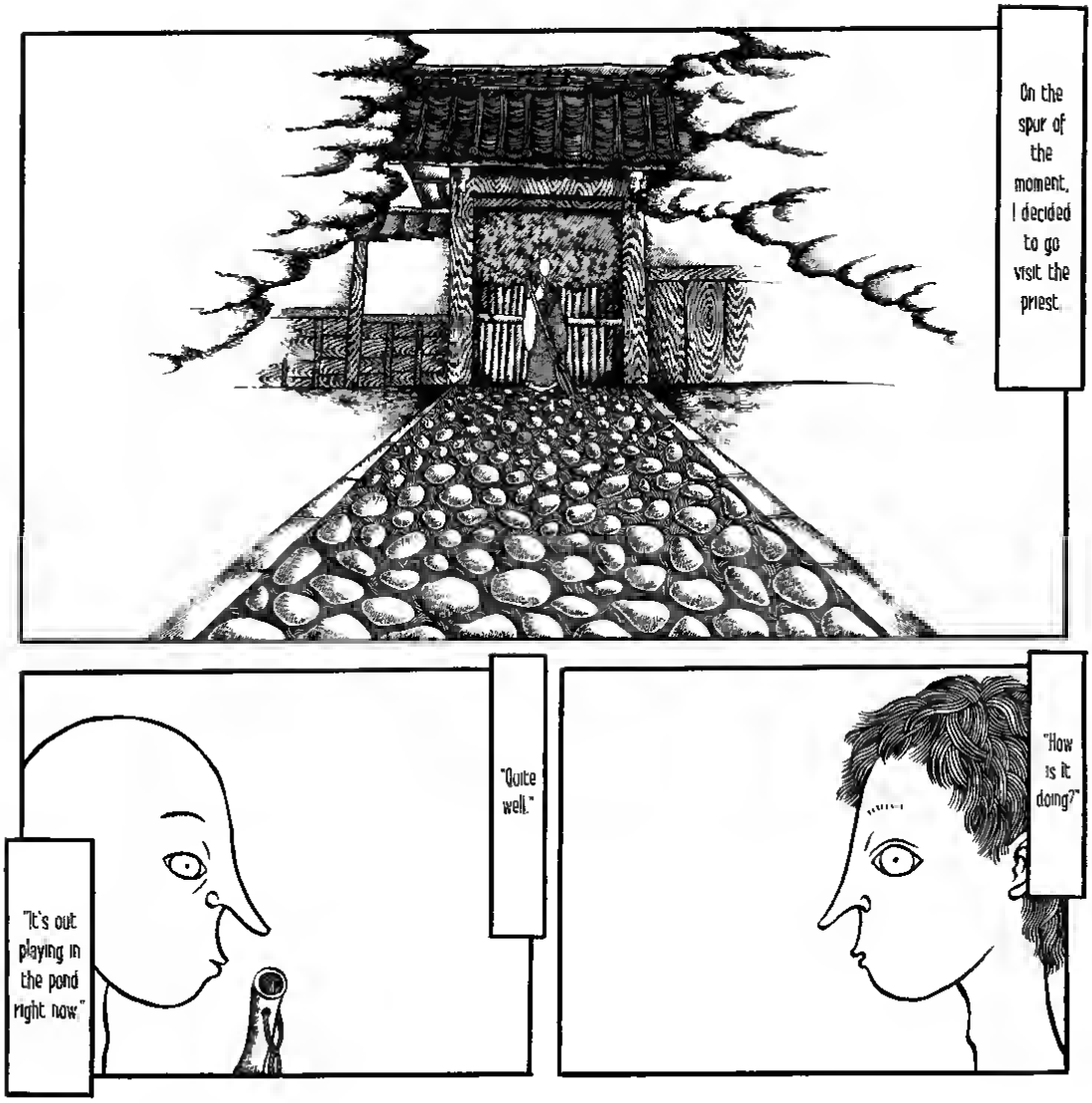

"This is very sad indeed."
"Yes."

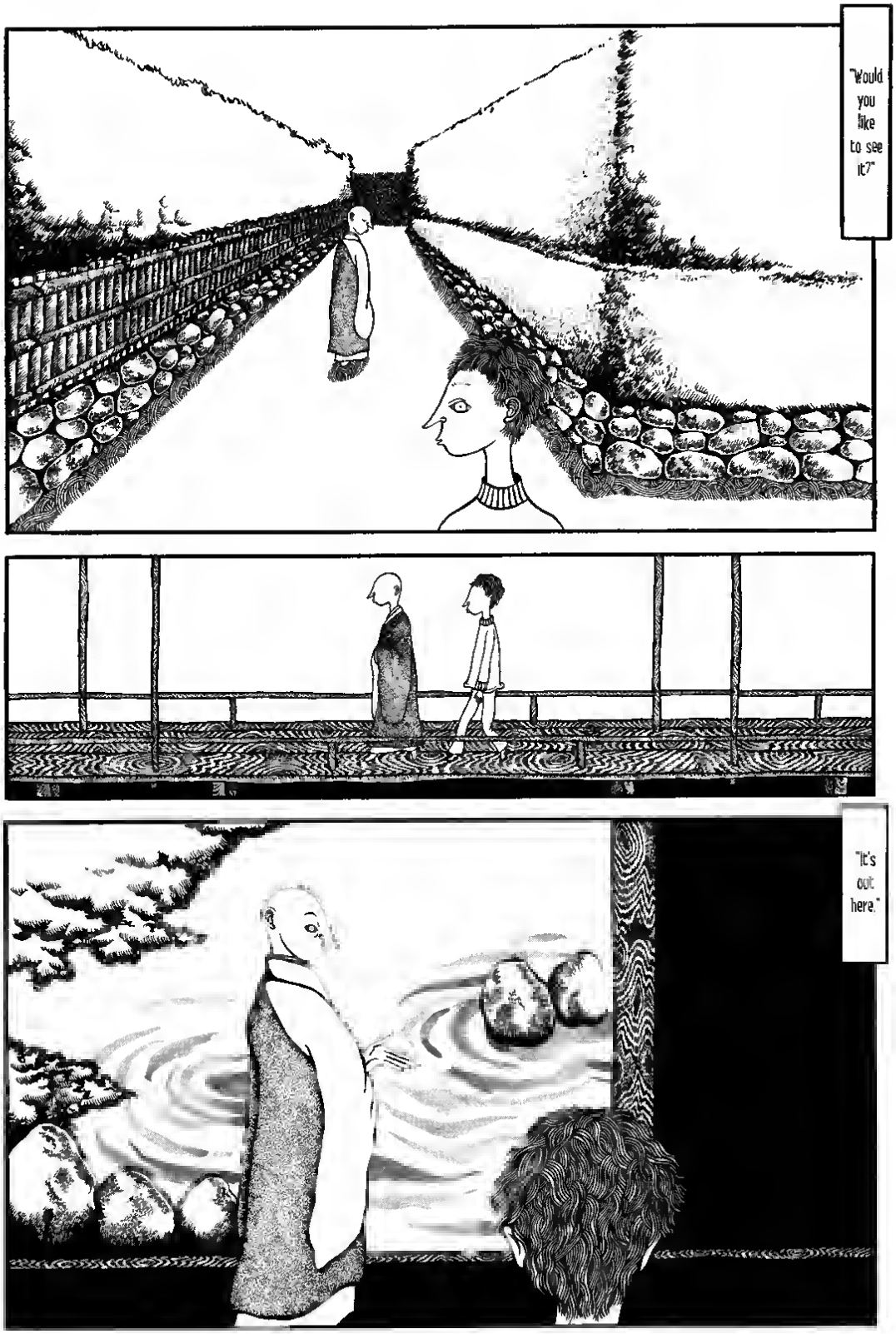

"As long as you're really sure."
"Would it really be OK to leave it with you?"
"What do you say? Will you leave this sadness in my care?"

Two years passed and my sadness did indeed disappear.

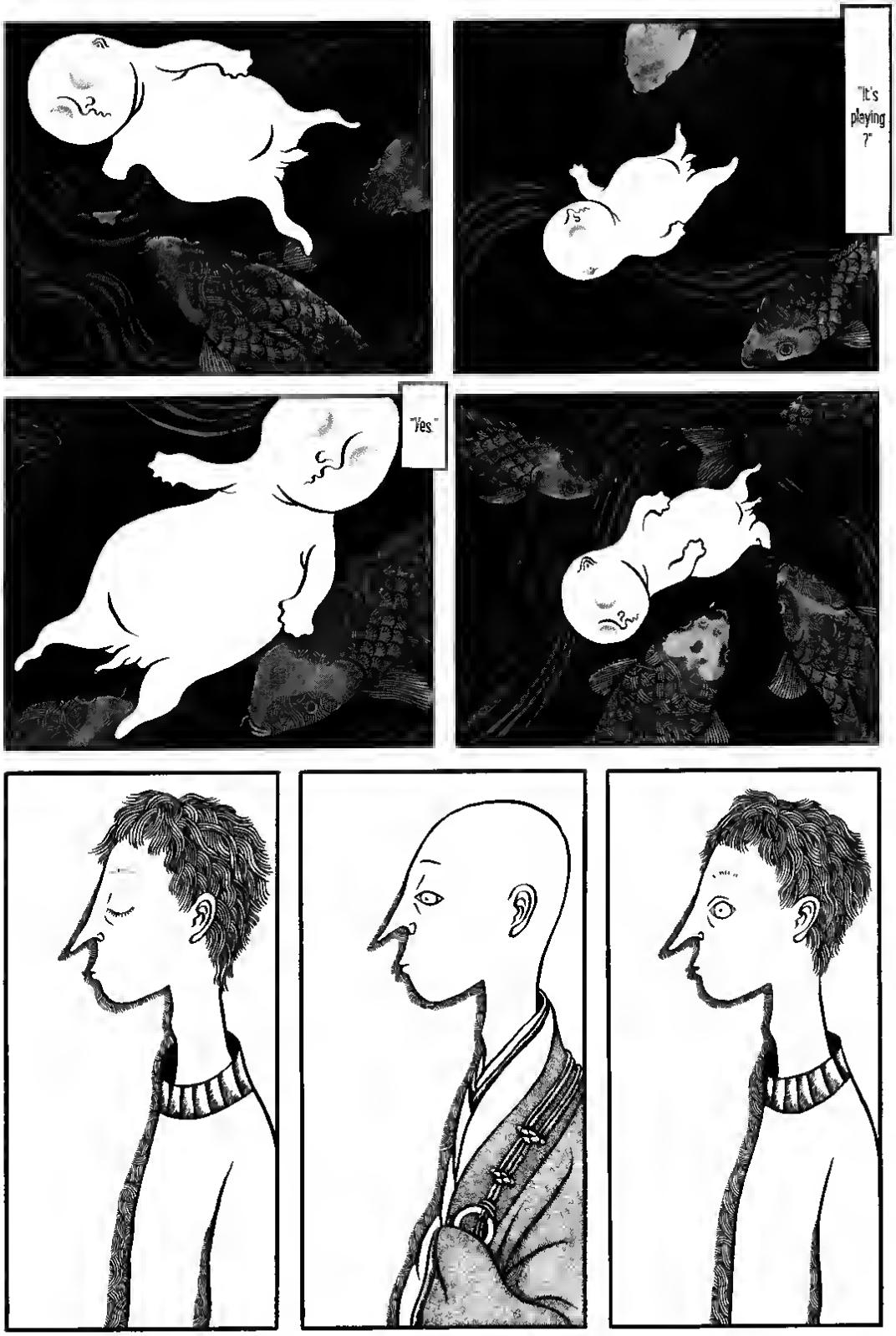
I realized that one could live without sadness

I also realized that even without sadness, there was no guarantee of happiness

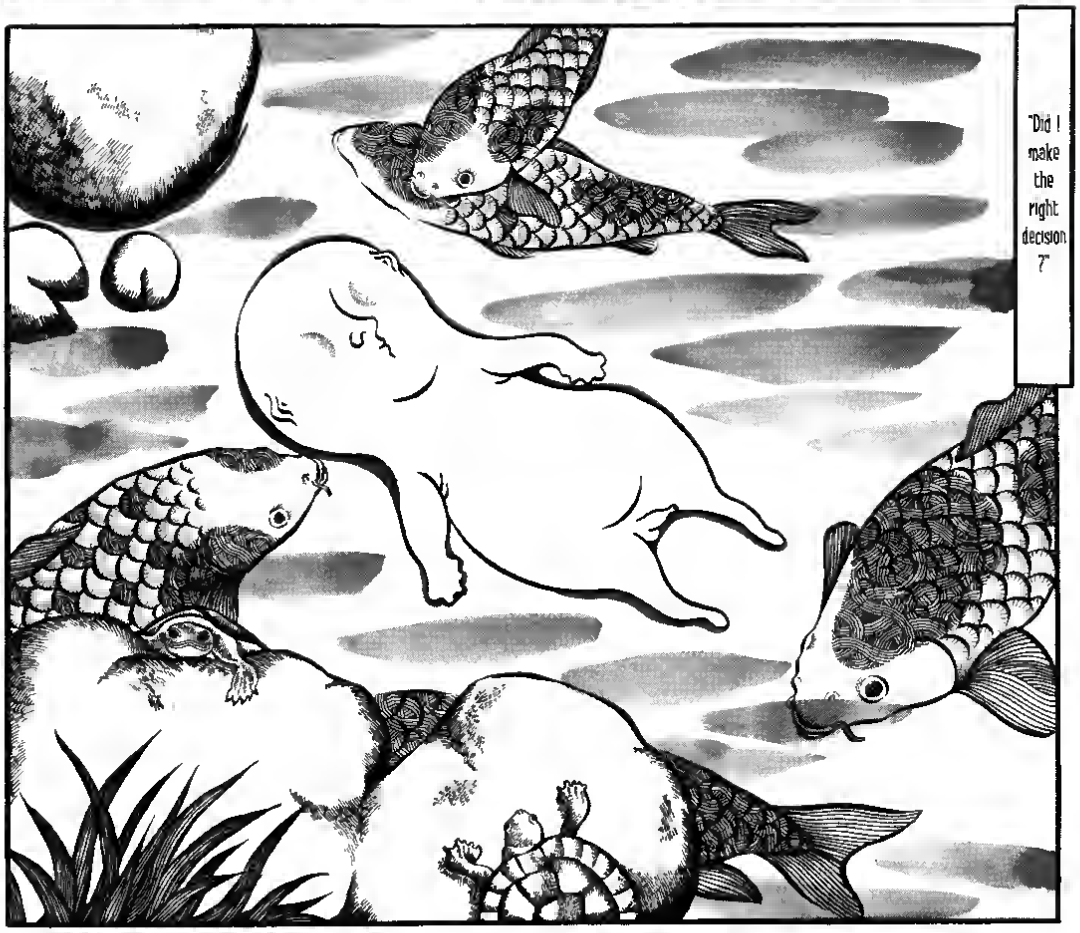


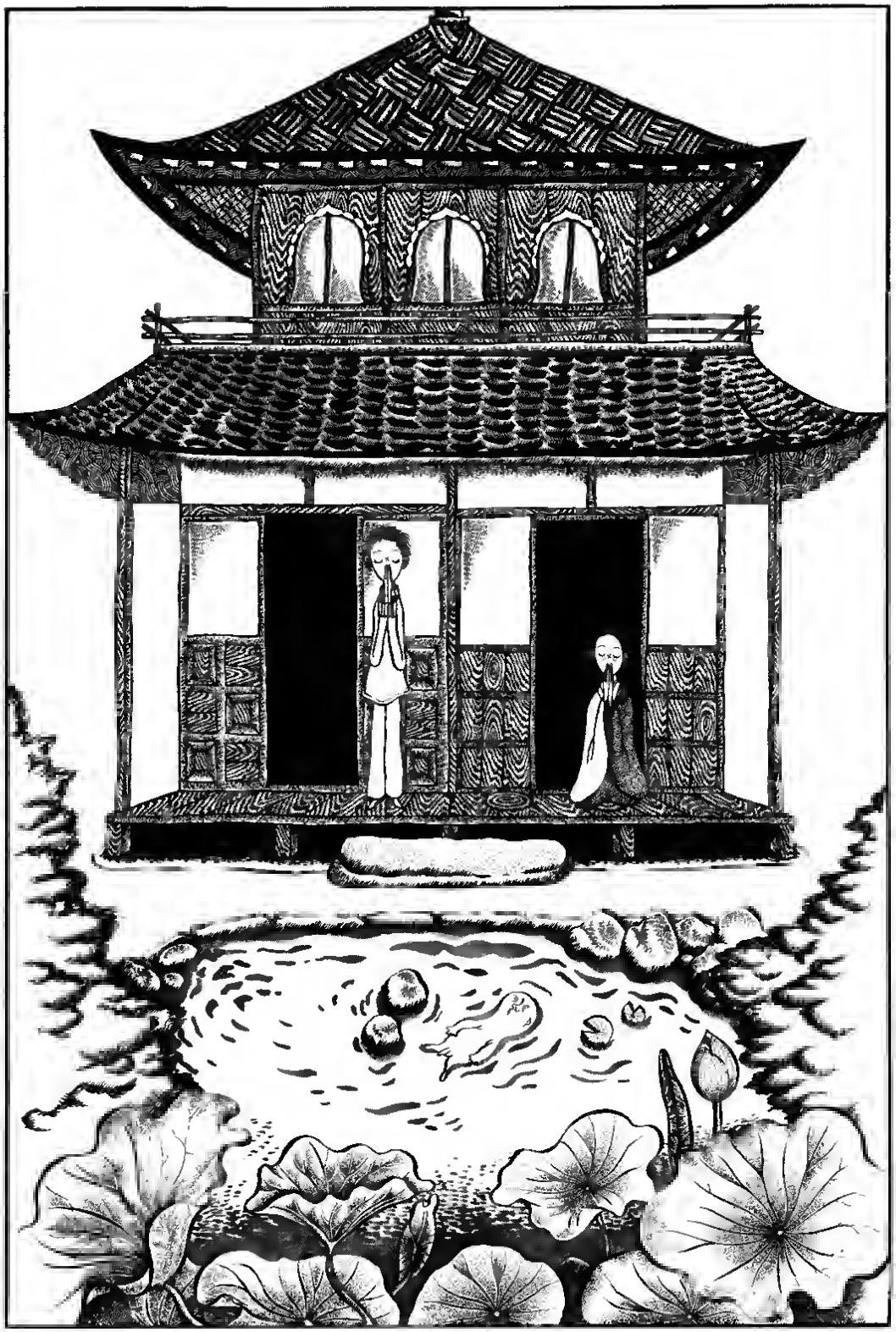

"Would you like to see it?"
"It's out here."

"It sure has gotten big."
"Yes, it has."


"It's playing ?"
"Yes."

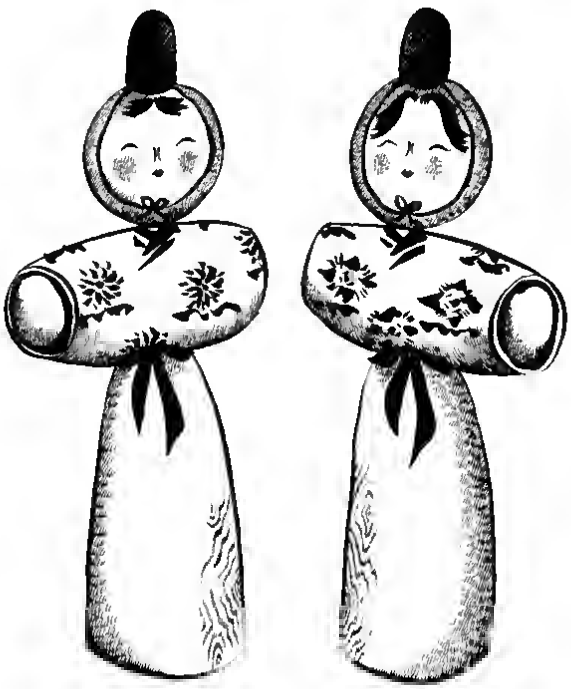
"Sir..."

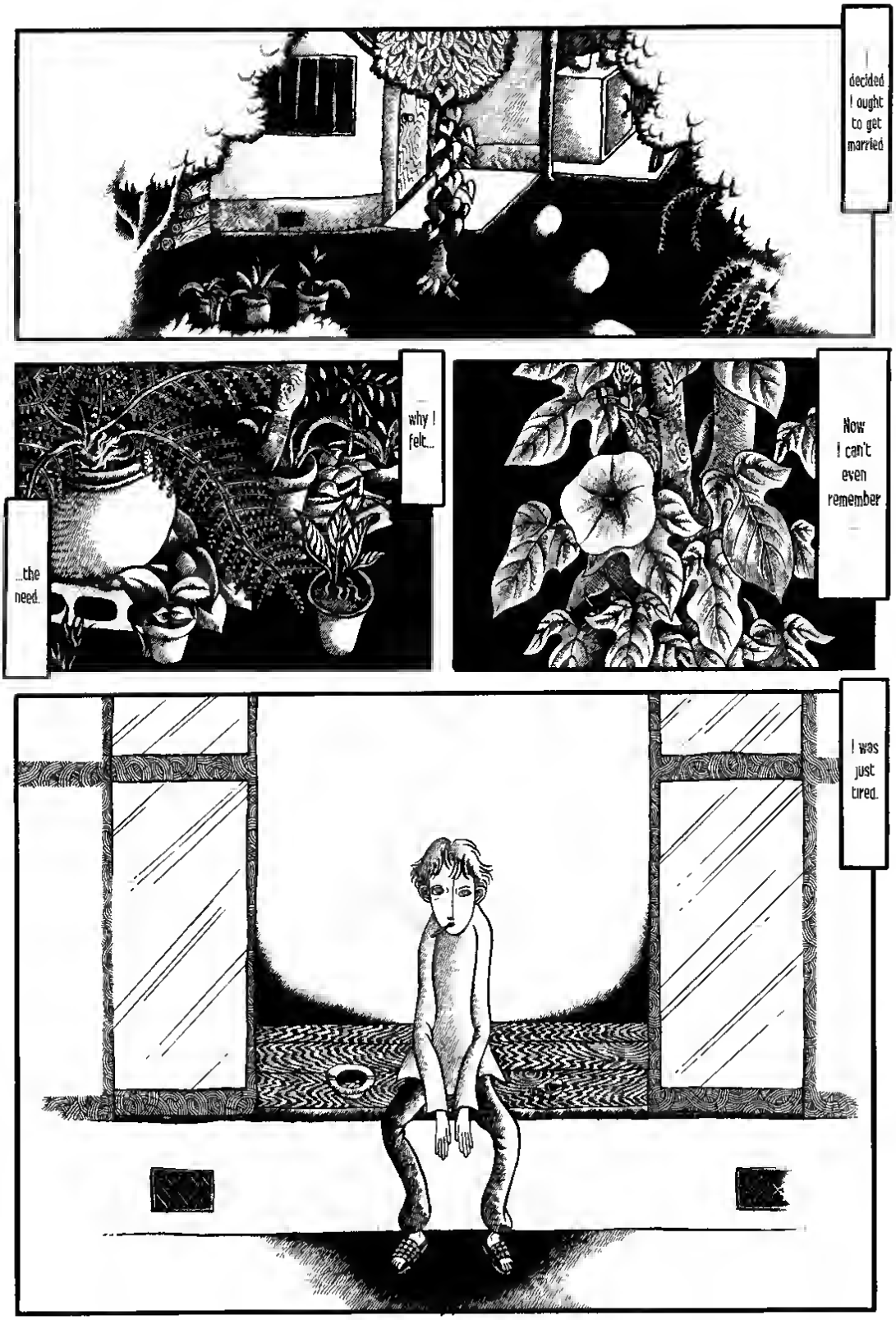

"Did I make the right decision ?"

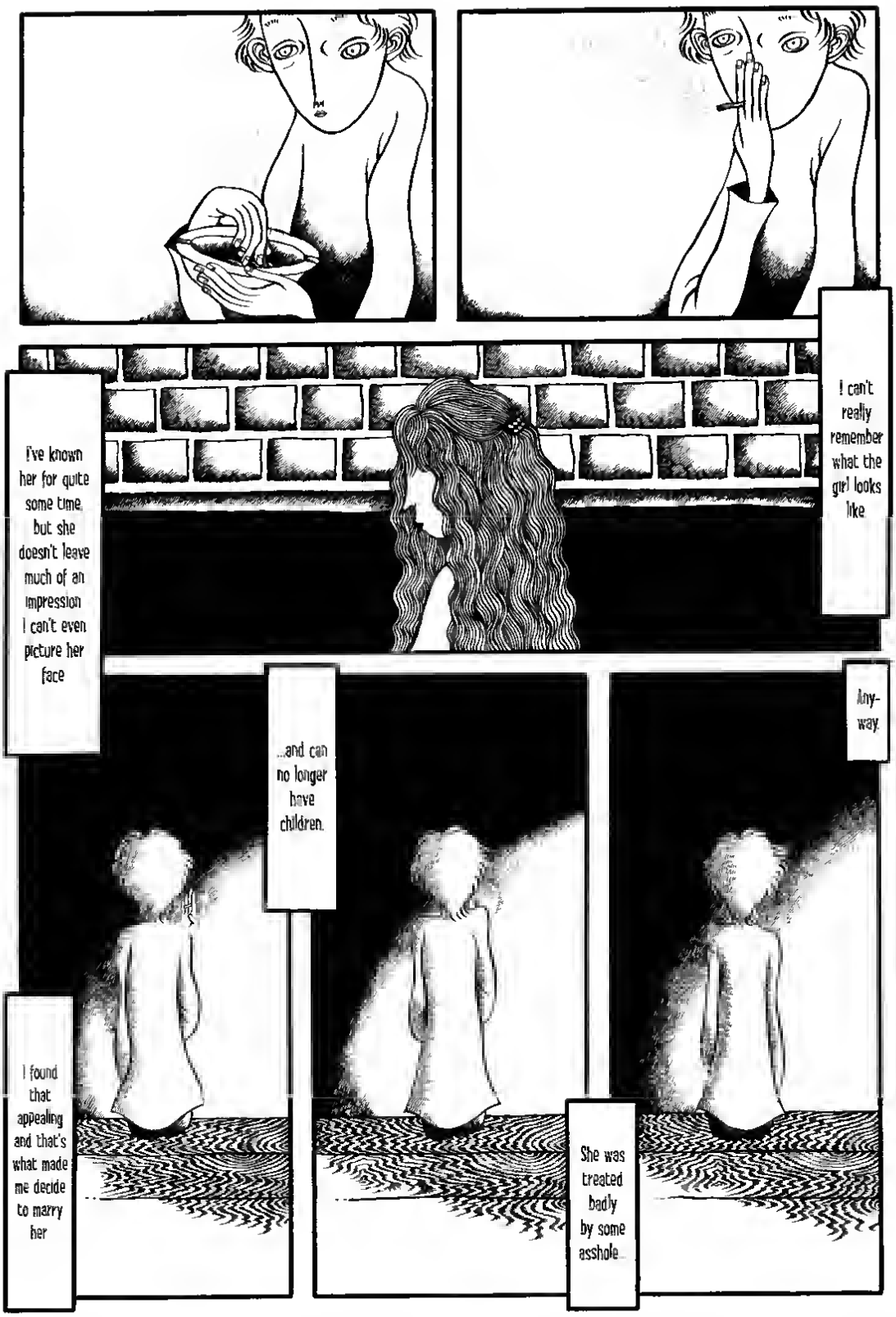


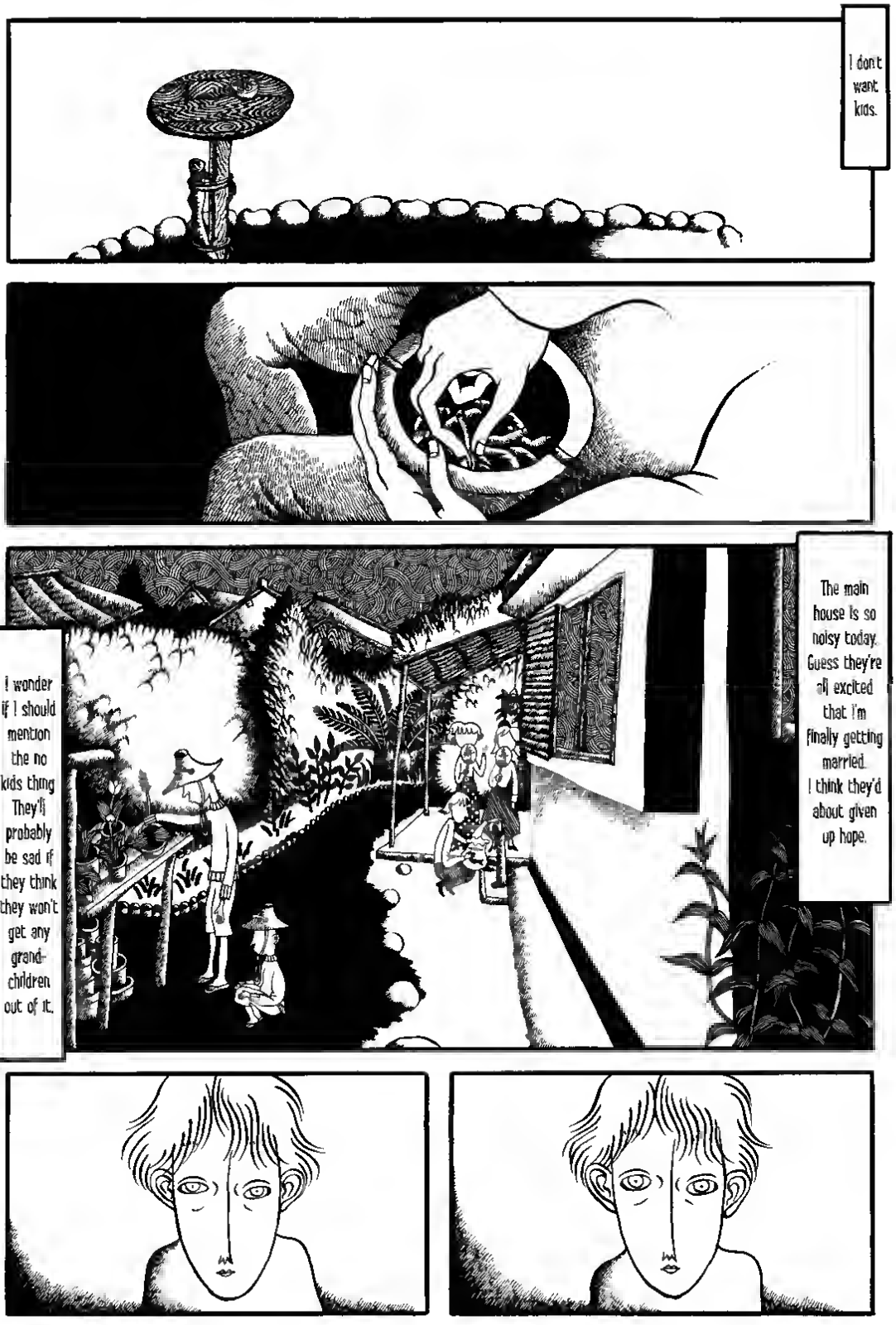
THE END

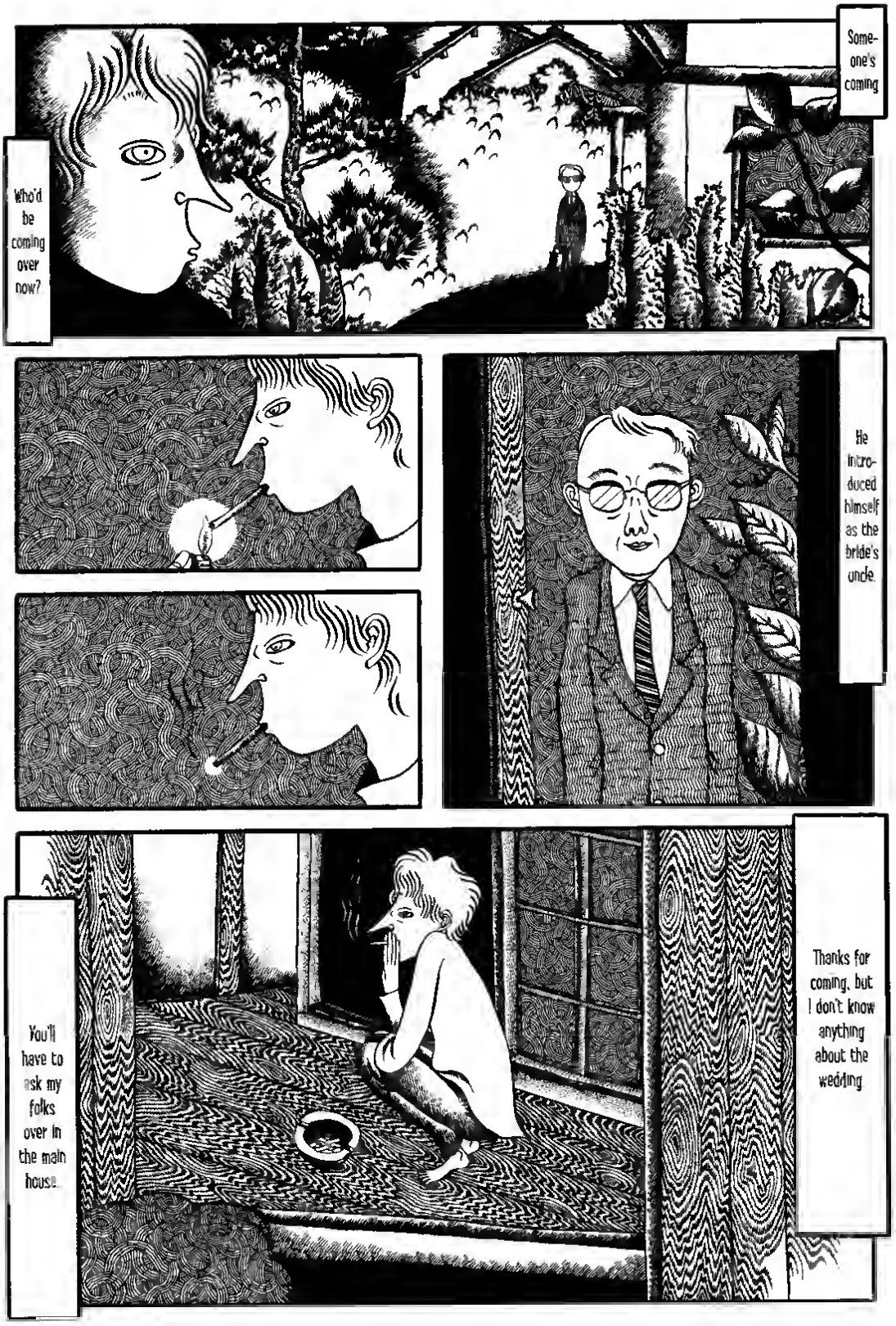
Wedding

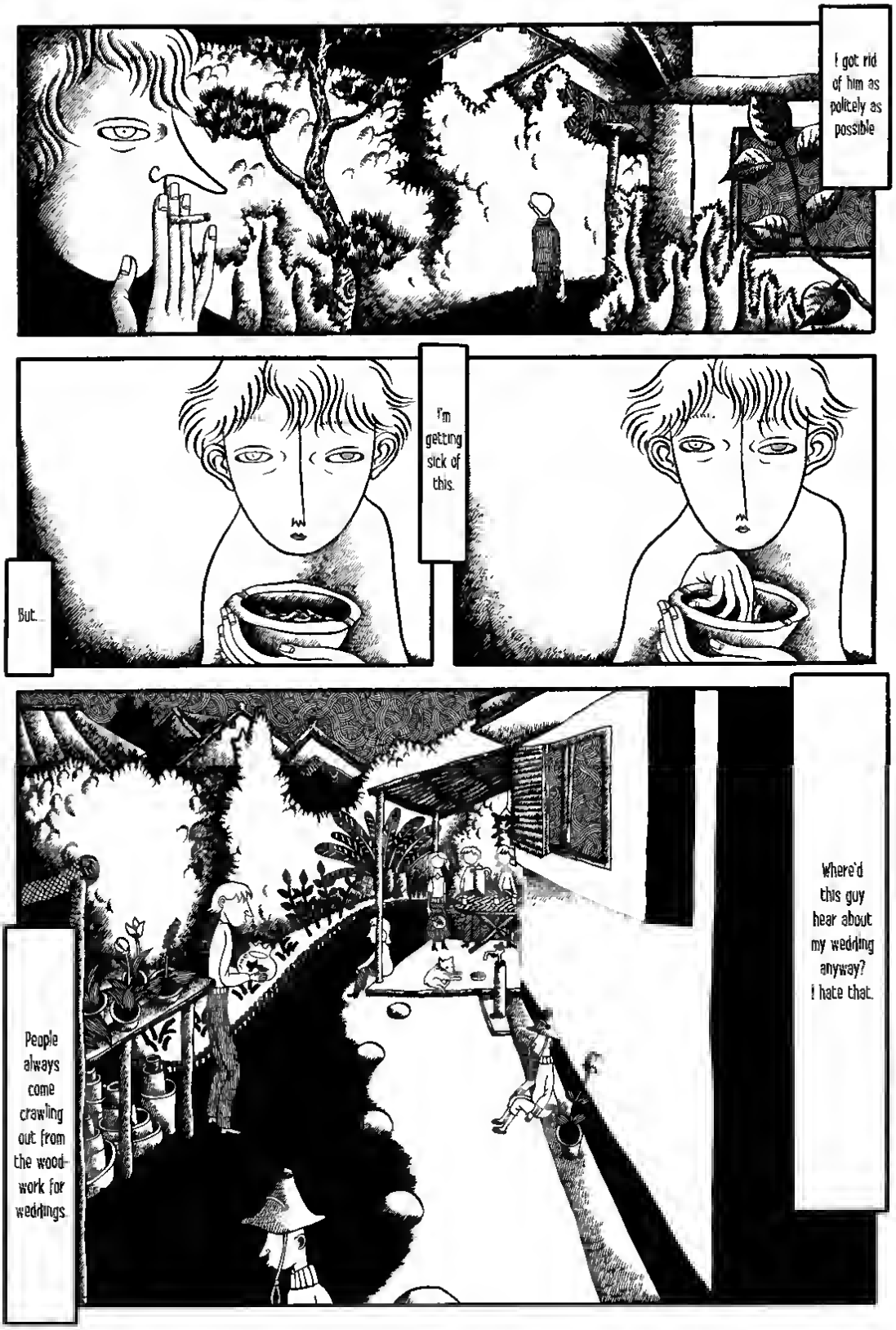


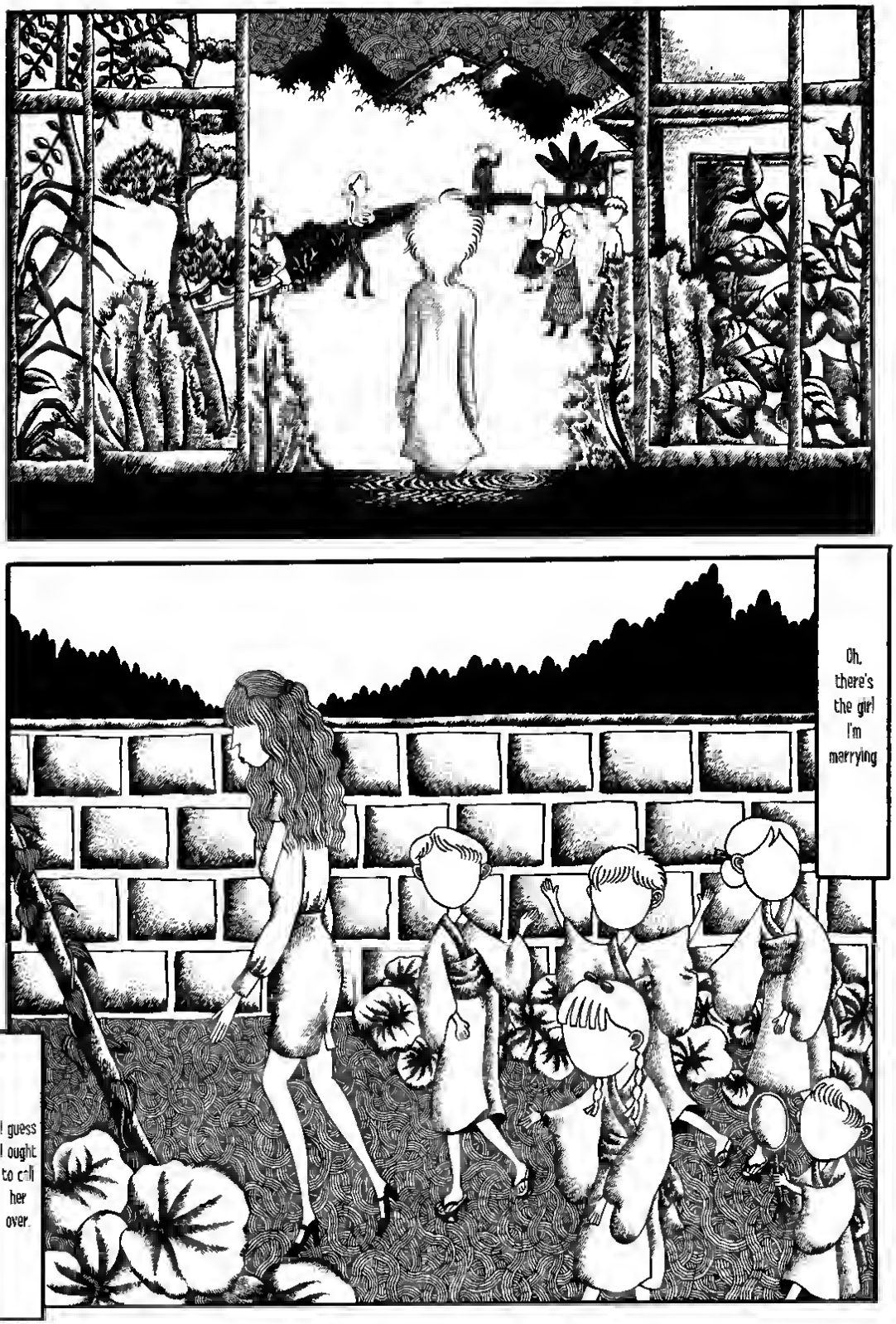

I decided I ought to get married
...why I felt...
...the need.
Now I can't even remember
I was just tired.

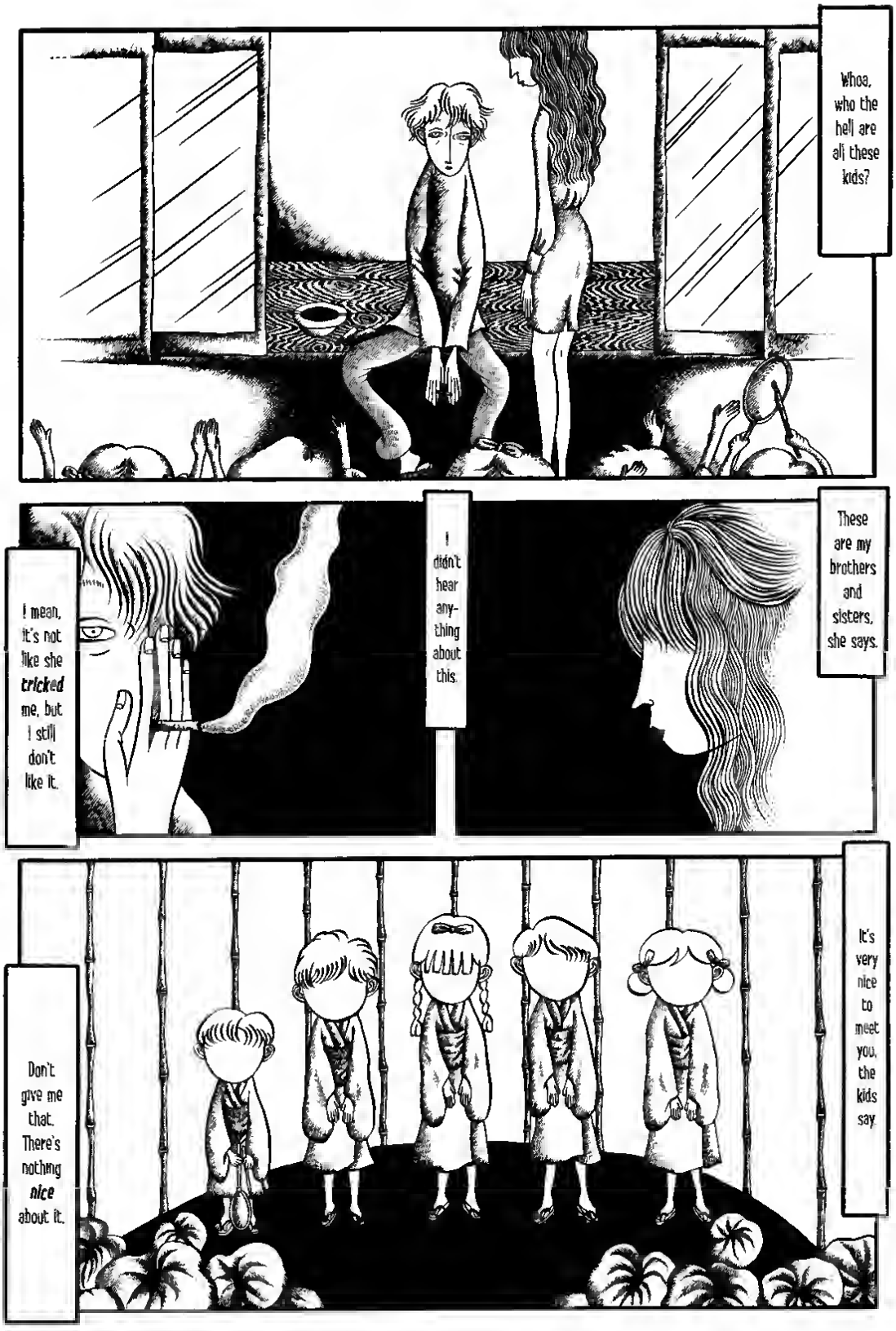

I've known her for quite some time, but she doesn't leave much of an impression I can't even picture her face
I can't really remember what the girl looks like
...and can no longer have children.
Anyway.
I found that appealing and that's what made me decide to marry her
She was treated badly by some asshole...


I don't want kids.
I wonder if I should mention the no kids thing. They'll probably be sad if they think they won't get any grand-children out of it.
The main house is so noisy today. Guess they're all excited that I'm finally getting married. I think they'd about given up hope.

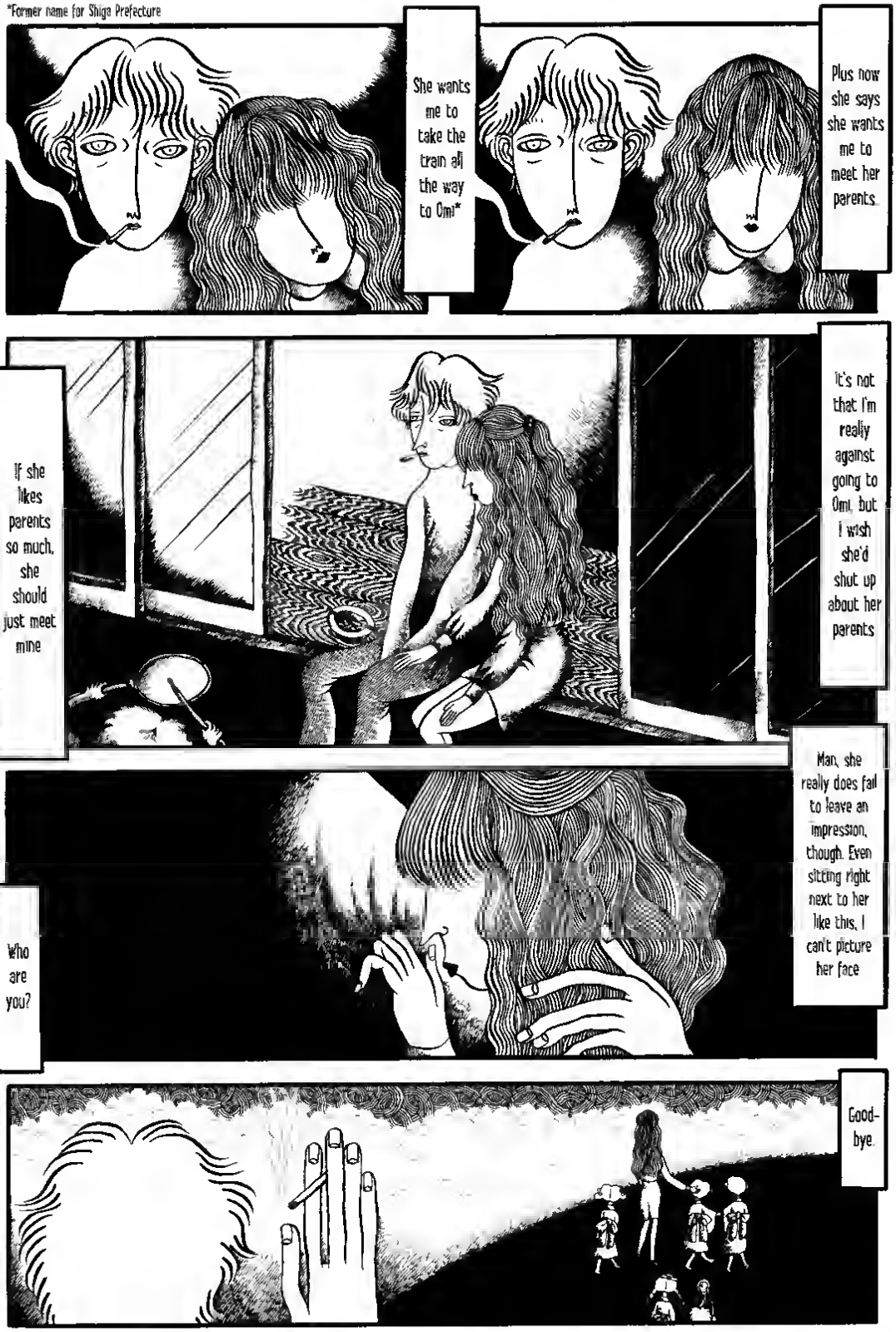

Who'd be coming over now?
Someone's coming
He introduced himself as the bride's uncle.
Thanks for coming, but I don't know anything about the wedding
You'll have to ask my folks over in the main house.

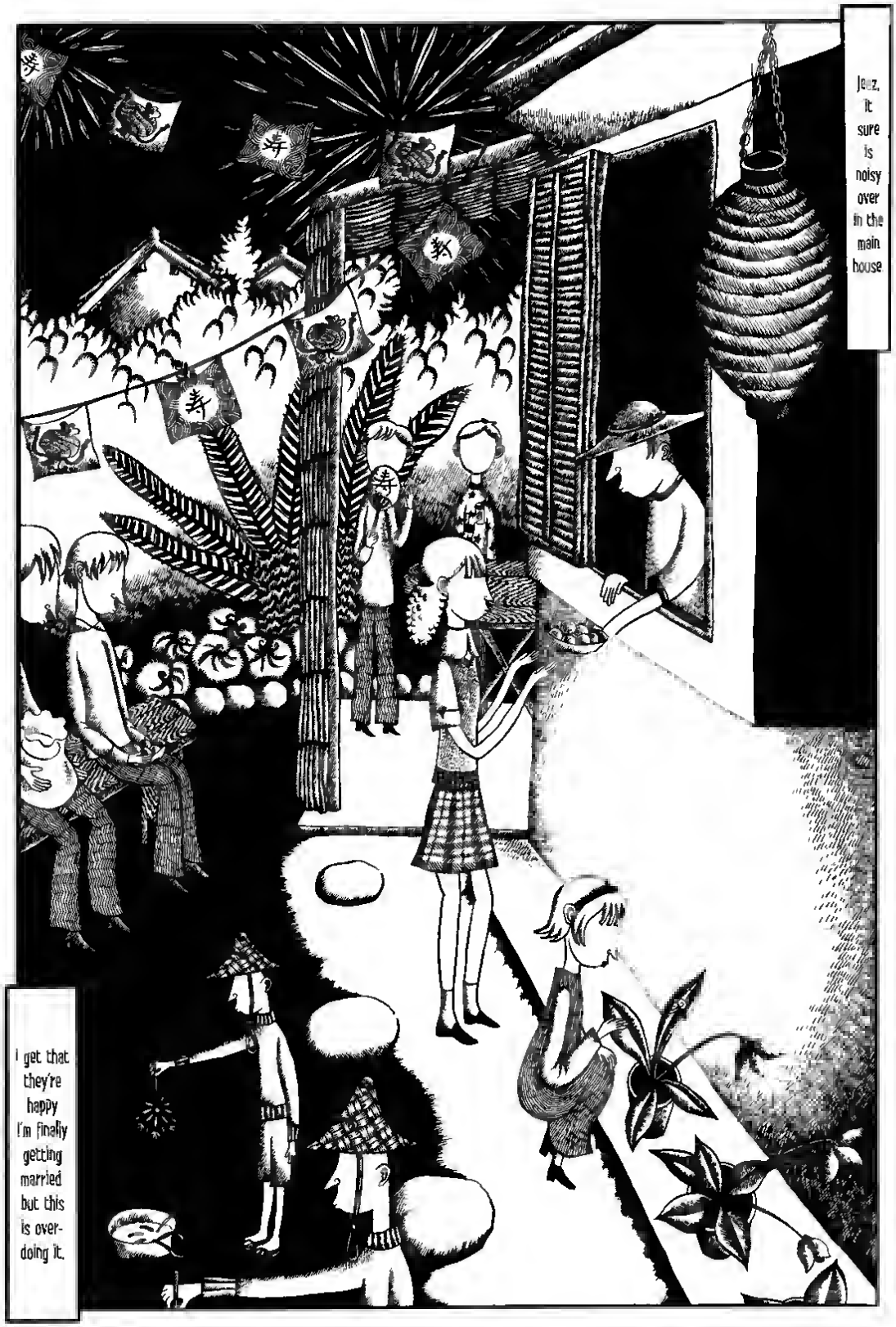

I got rid of him as politely as possible
But...
I'm getting sick of this.
Where'd this guy hear about my wedding anyway? I hate that.
People always come crawling out from the woodwork for weddings.

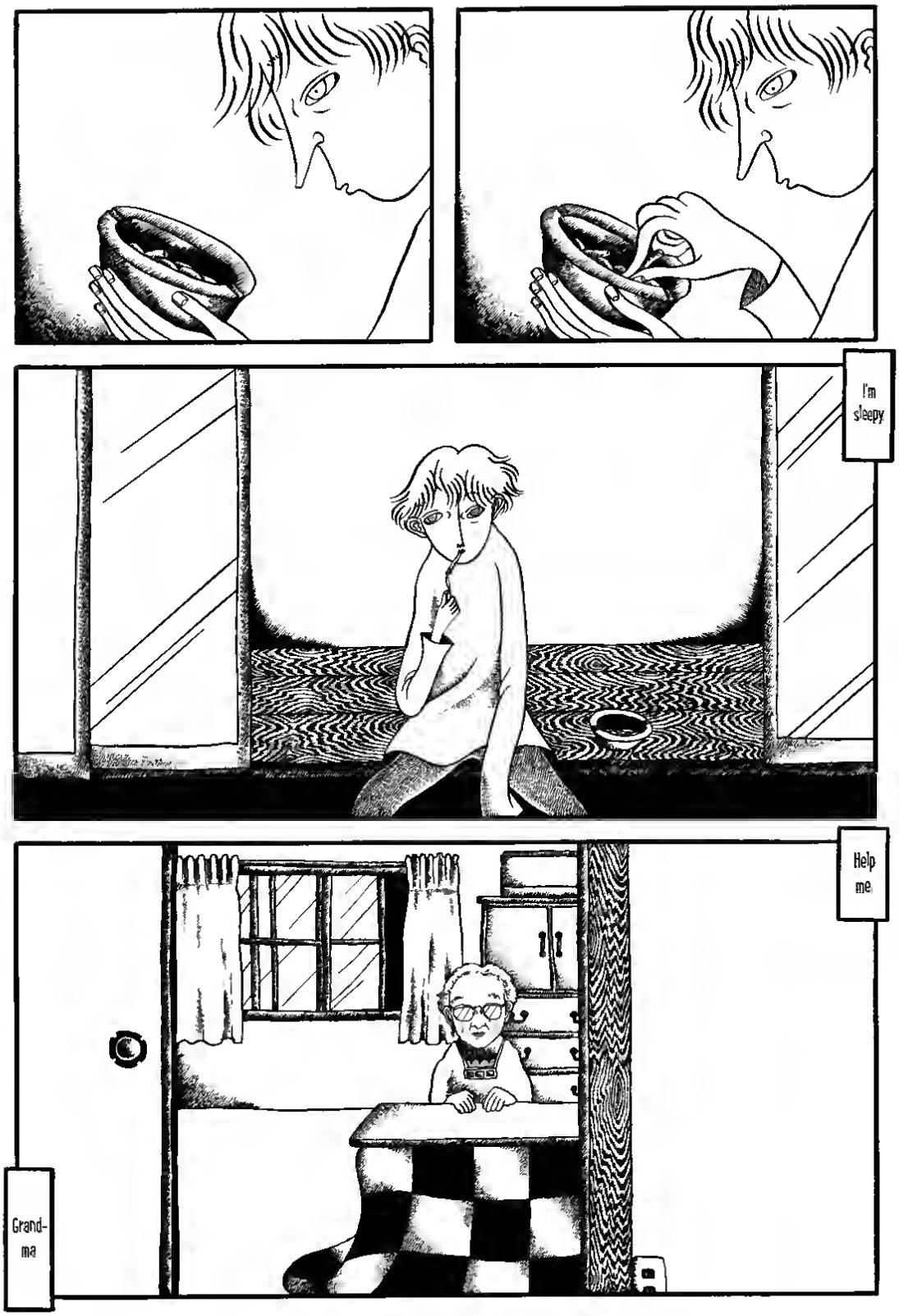

Oh, there's the girl I'm marrying
I guess I ought to call her over.

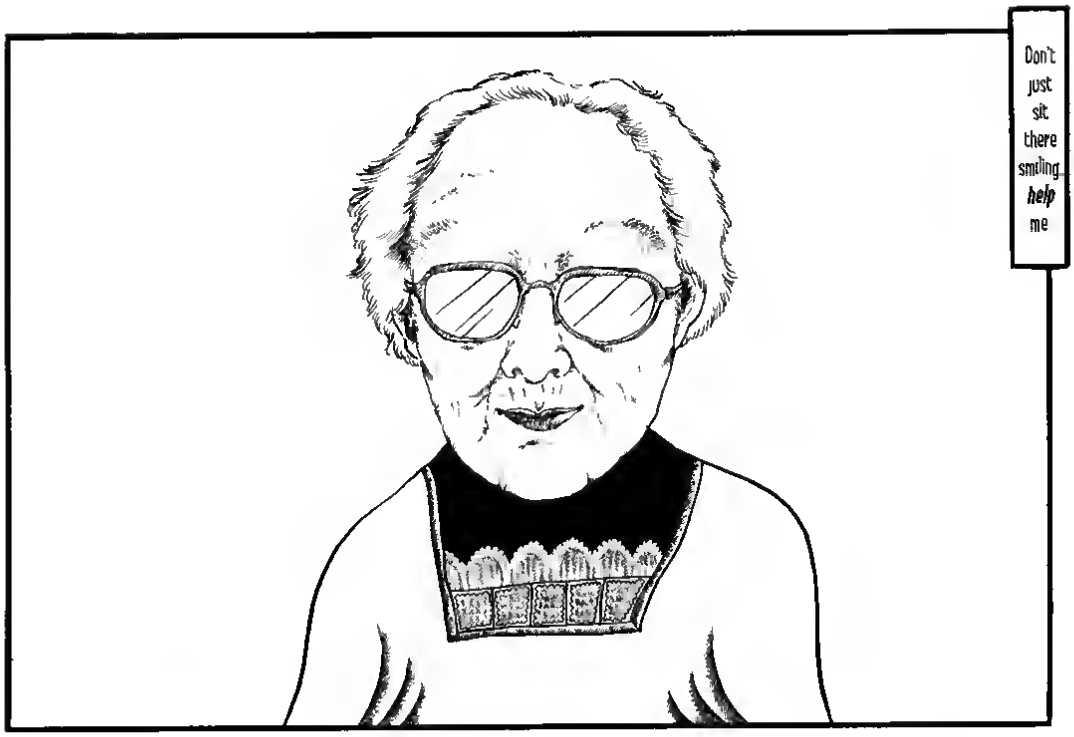

Whoa, who the hell are all these kids?
These are my brothers and sisters, she says.
I didn't hear anything about this.
I mean, it's not like she tricked me, but I still don't like it.
It's very nice to meet you, the kids say.
Don't give me that. There's nothing nice about it.

*Former name for Shiga Prefecture

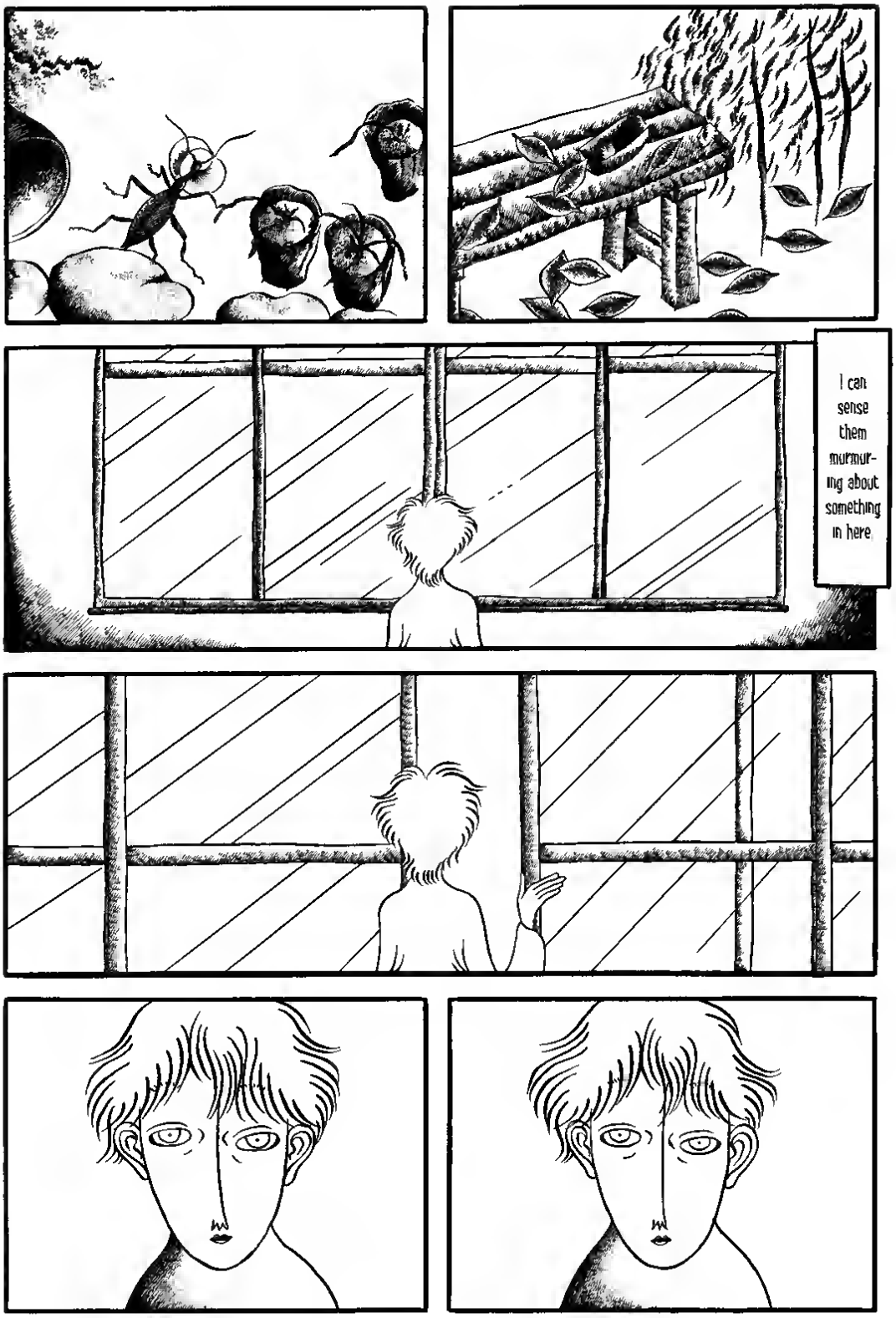

She wants me to take the train all the way to Omi*
Plus now she says she wants me to meet her parents.
If she likes parents so much, she should just meet mine
It's not that I'm really against going to Omi, but I wish she'd shut up about her parents
Who are you?
Man, she really does fail to leave an impression, though. Even sitting right next to her like this, I can't picture her face
Good-bye.

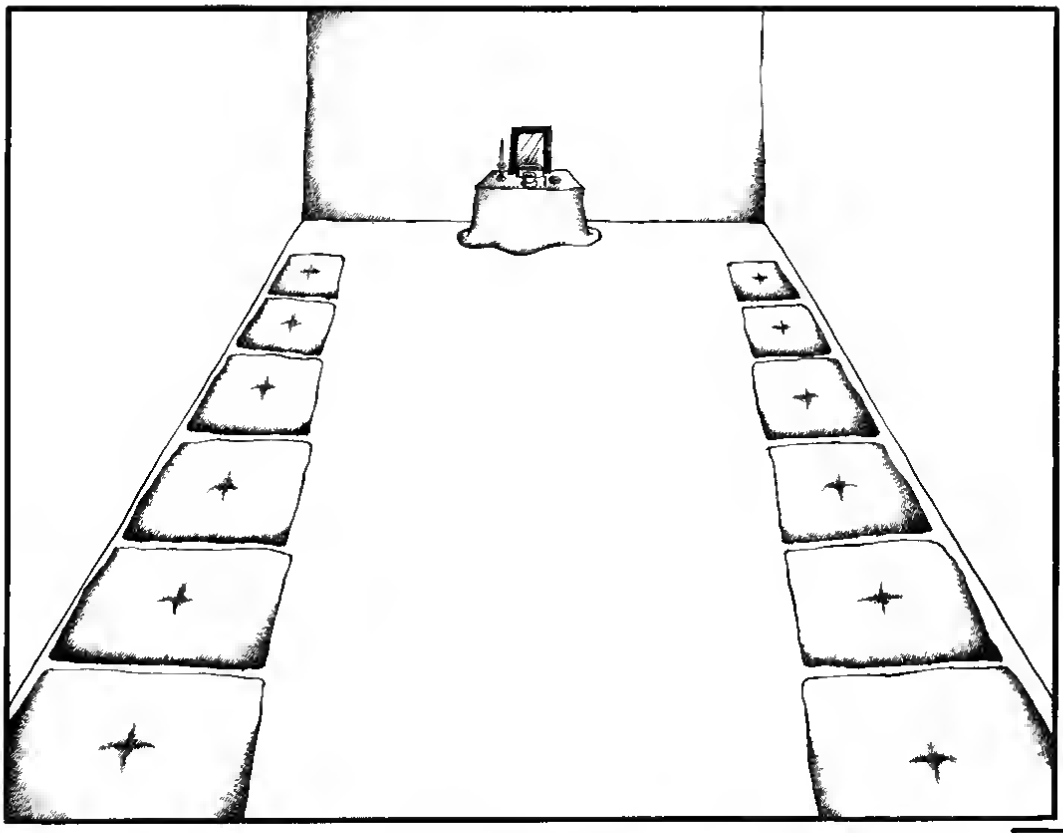

Jeez, it sure is noisy over in the main house
I get that they're happy I'm finally getting married but this is over-doing it.

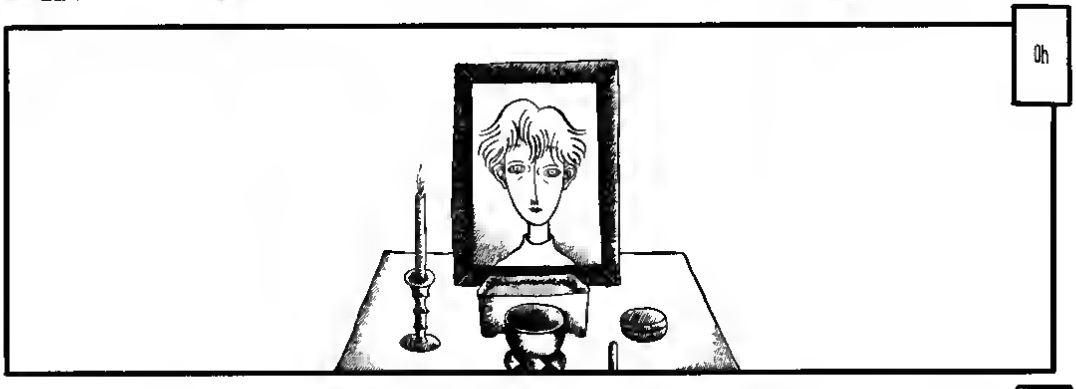

I'm sleepy
Help me
Grand-ma


Don't just sit there smiling. help me

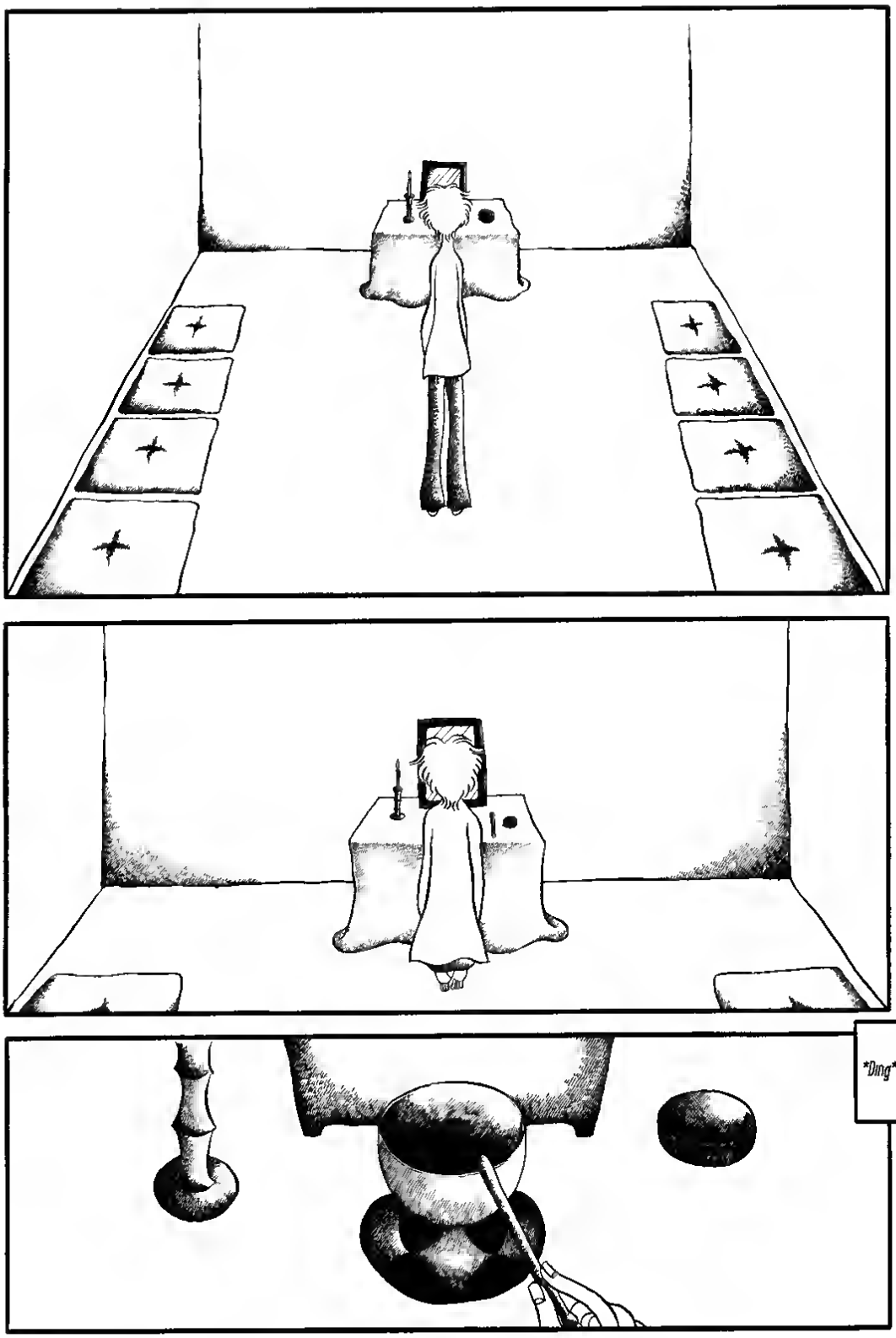
The noise level's died down a bit, so maybe I'll go take a look.

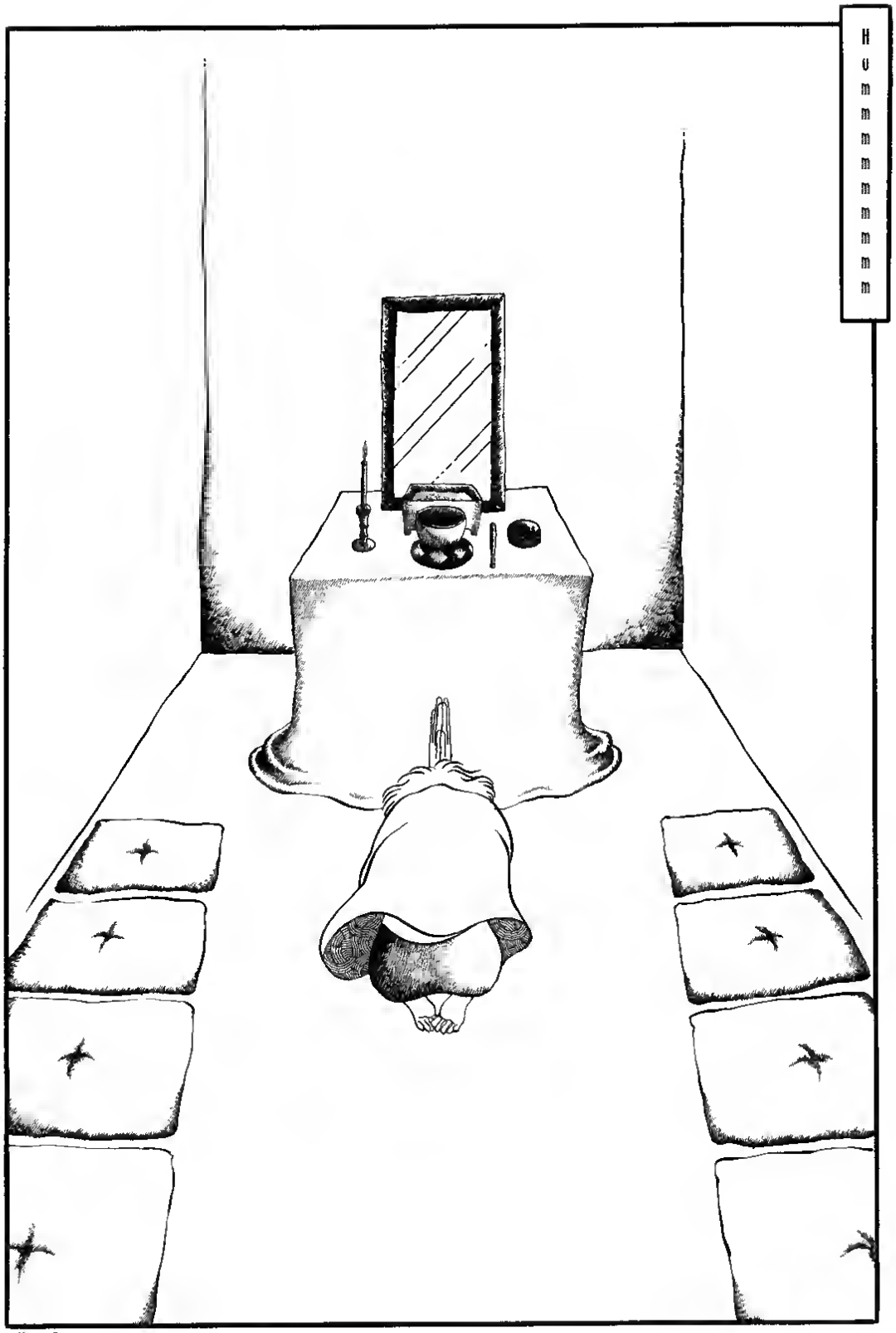

I can sense them murmuring about something in here.




Oh

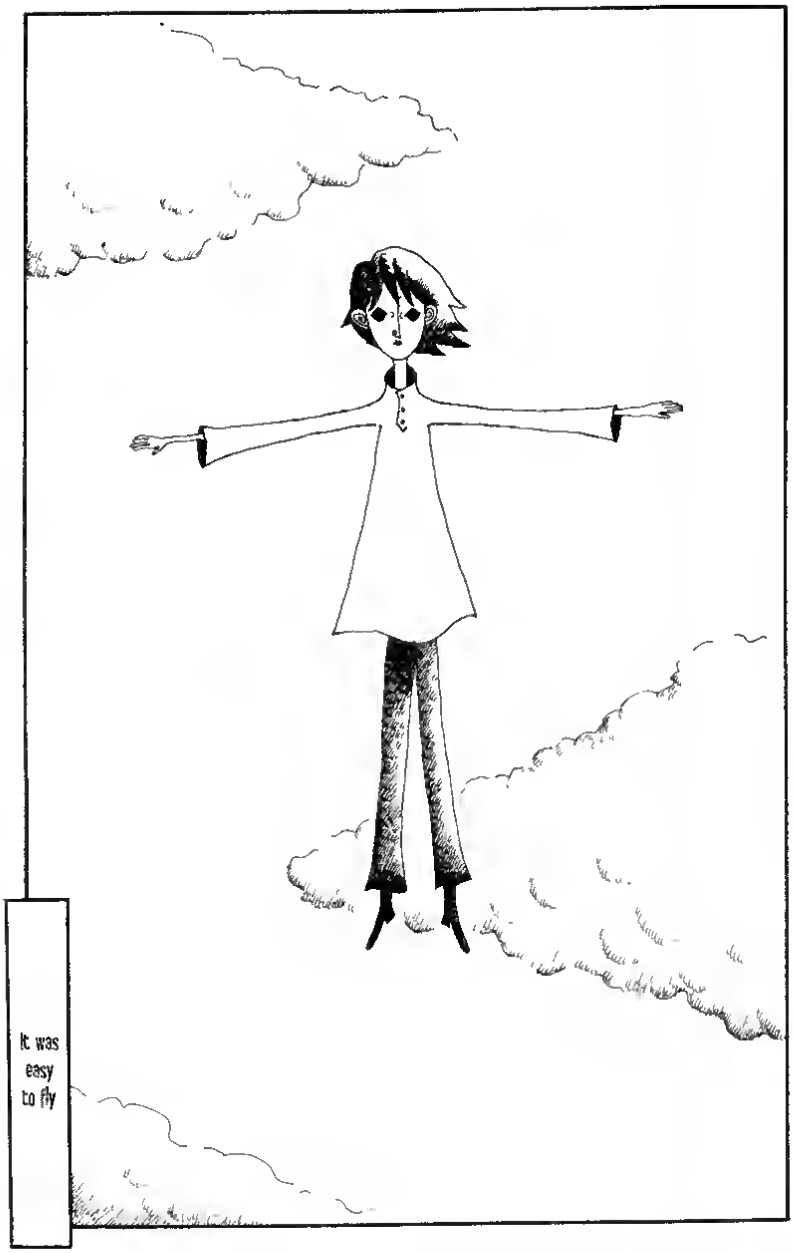
So that's it.

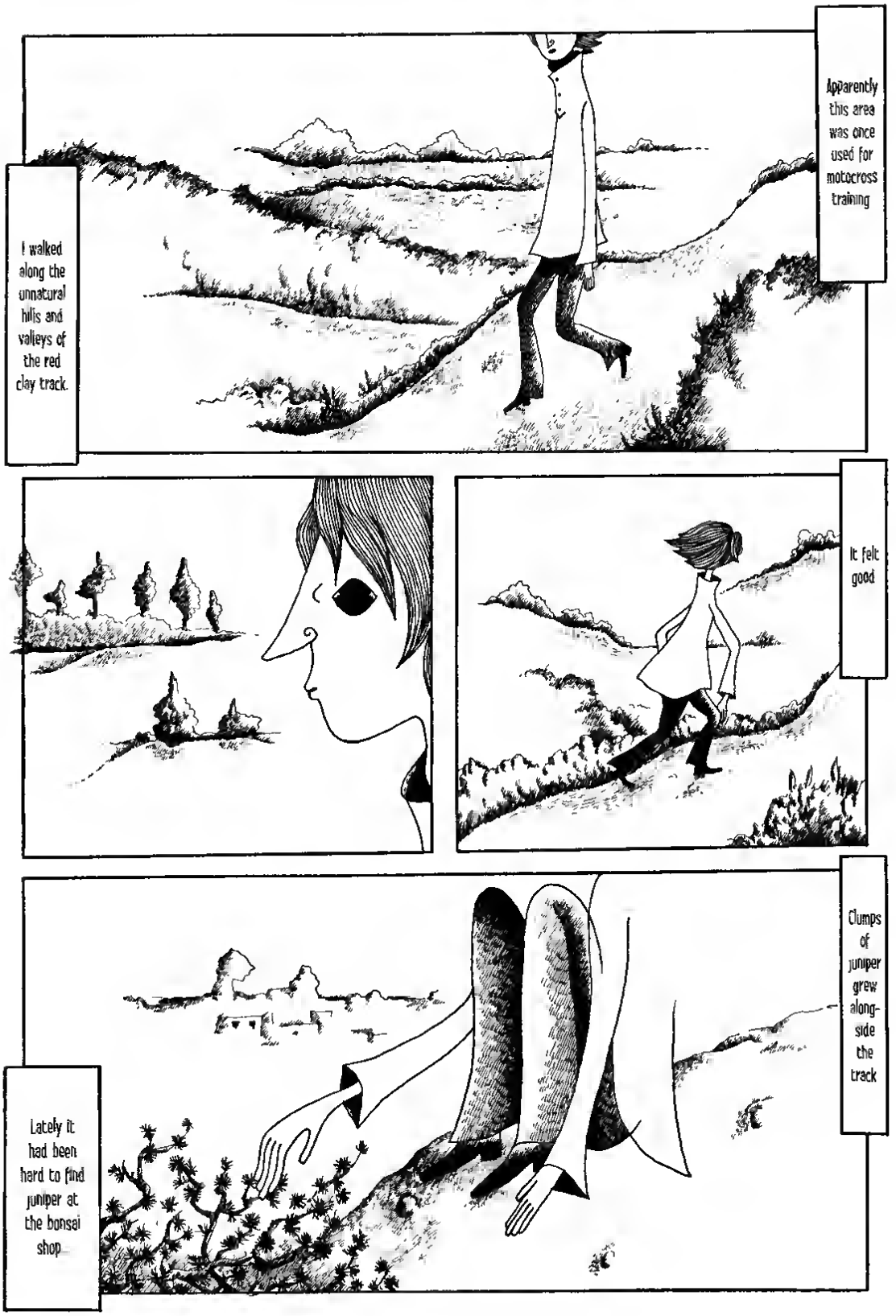

Ding

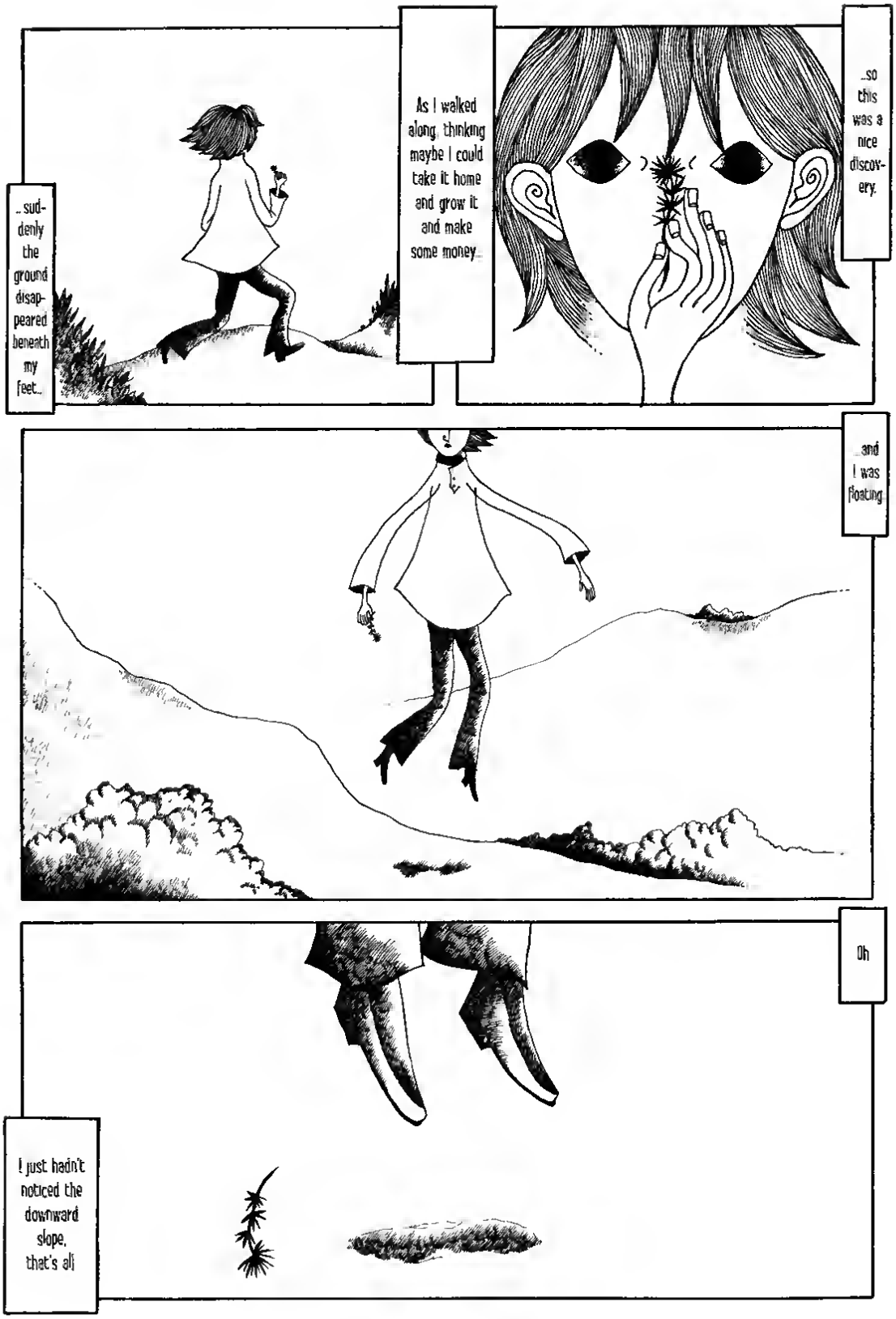


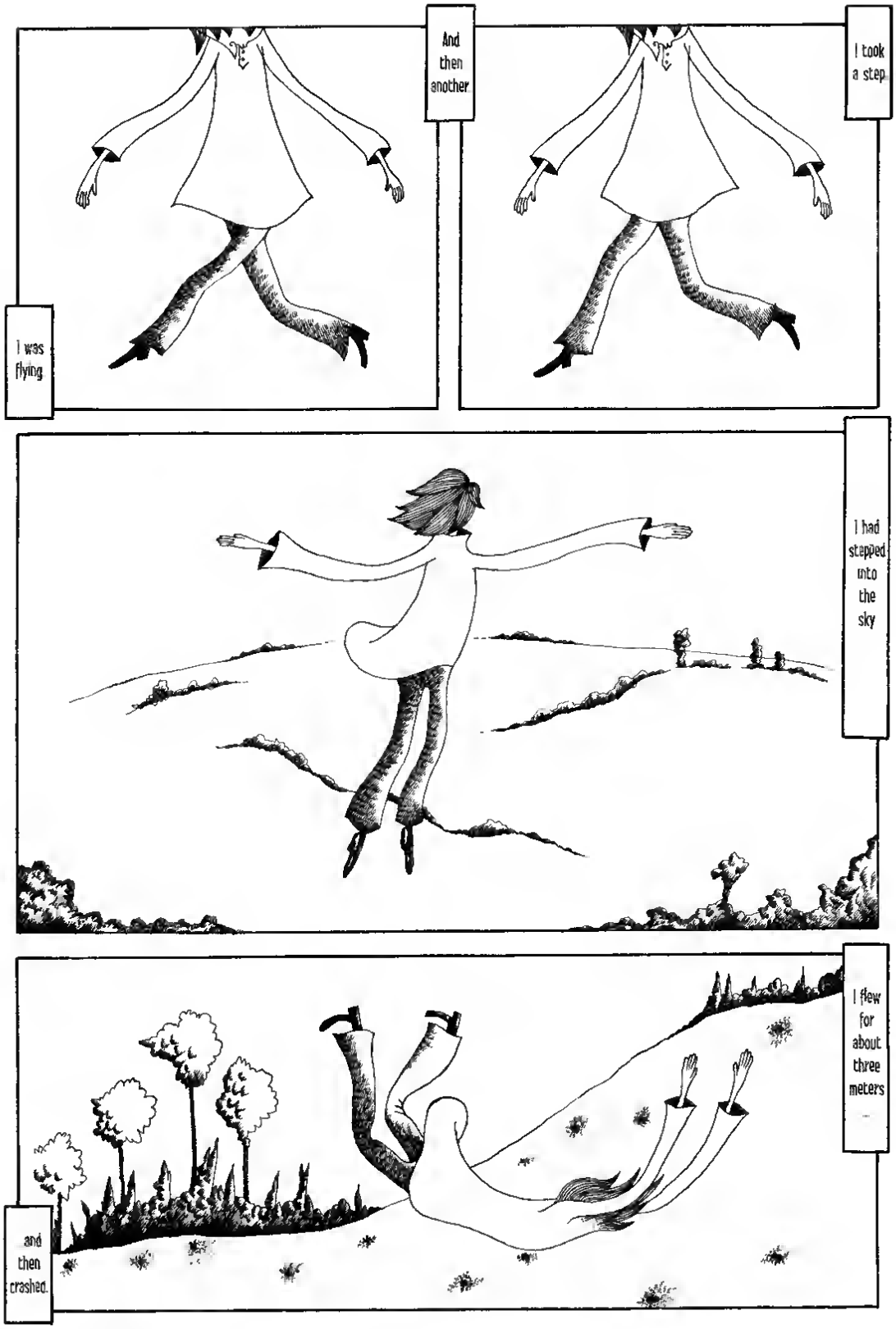
THE END

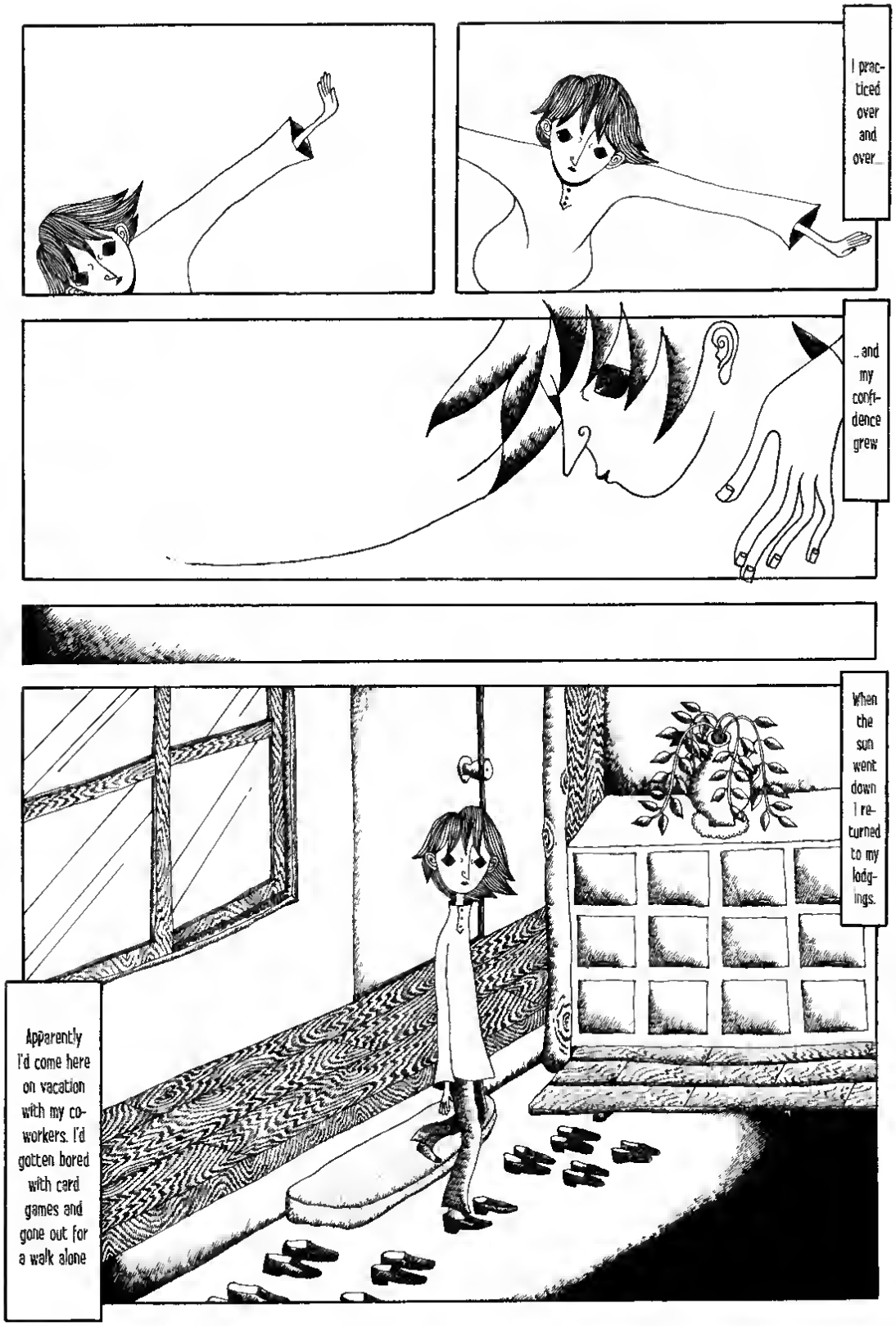
Flying

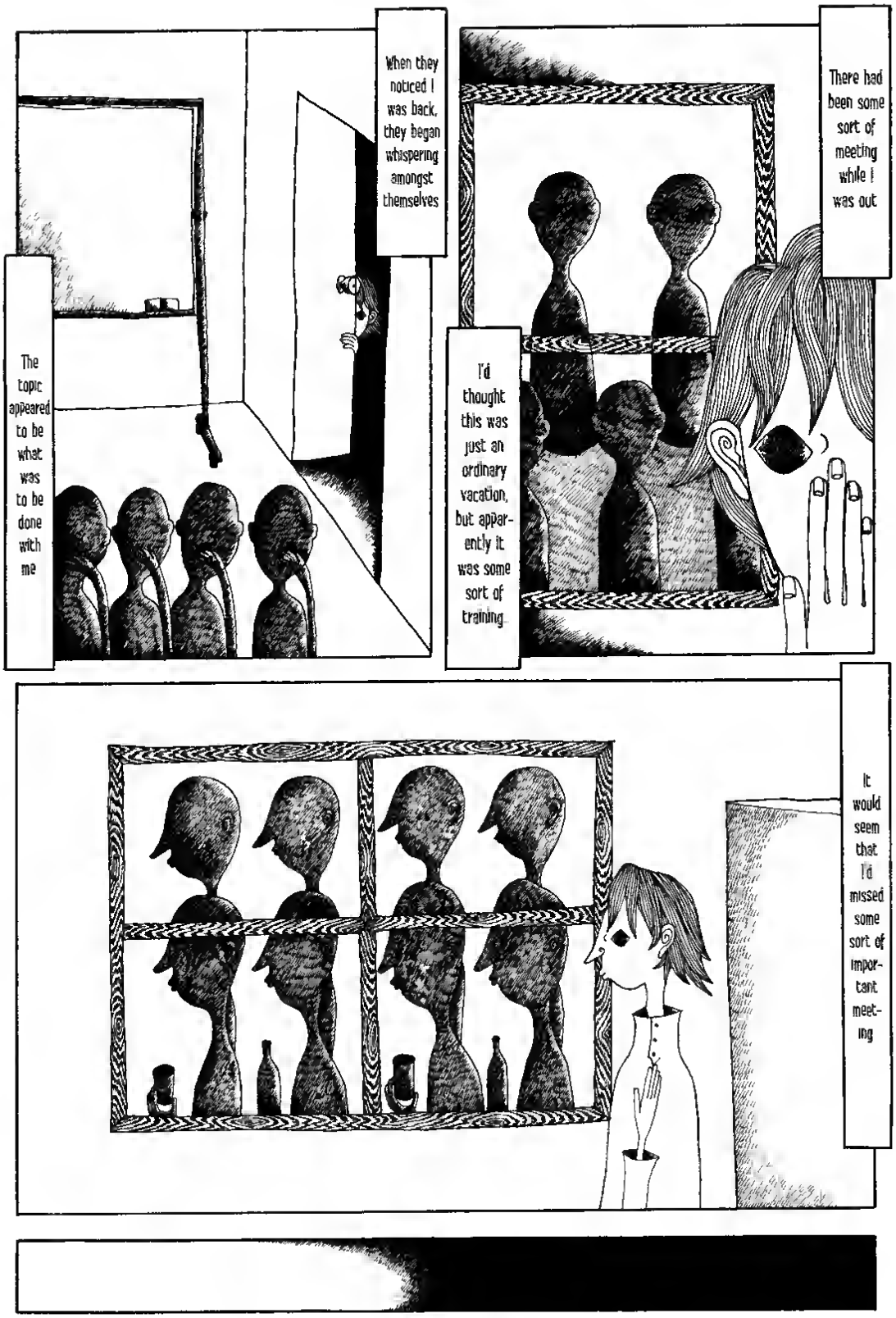


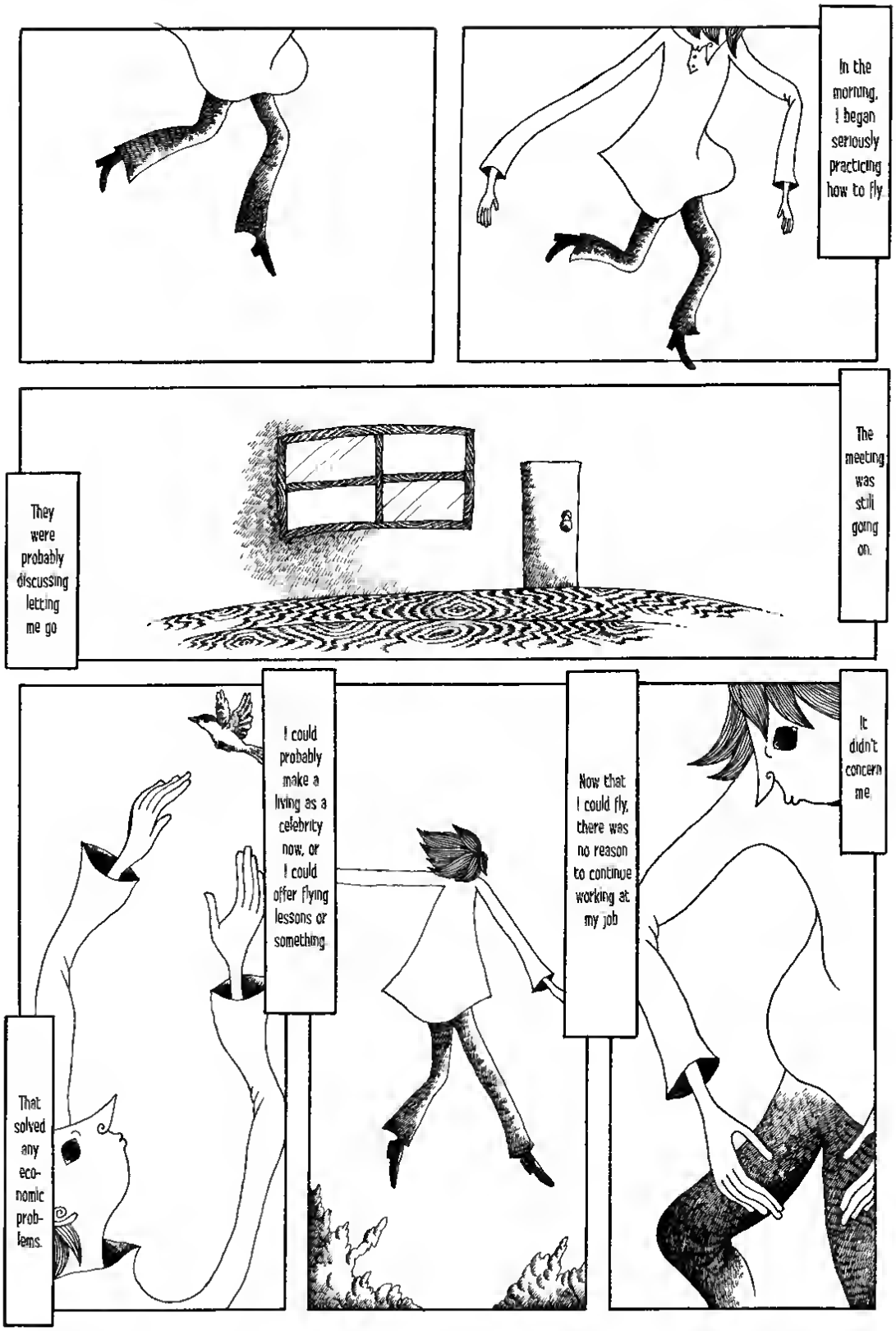

I walked along the unnatural hills and valleys of the red clay track.
Apparently this area was once used for motocross training
It felt good
Lately it had been hard to find juniper at the bonsai shop
Clumps of juniper grew alongside the track

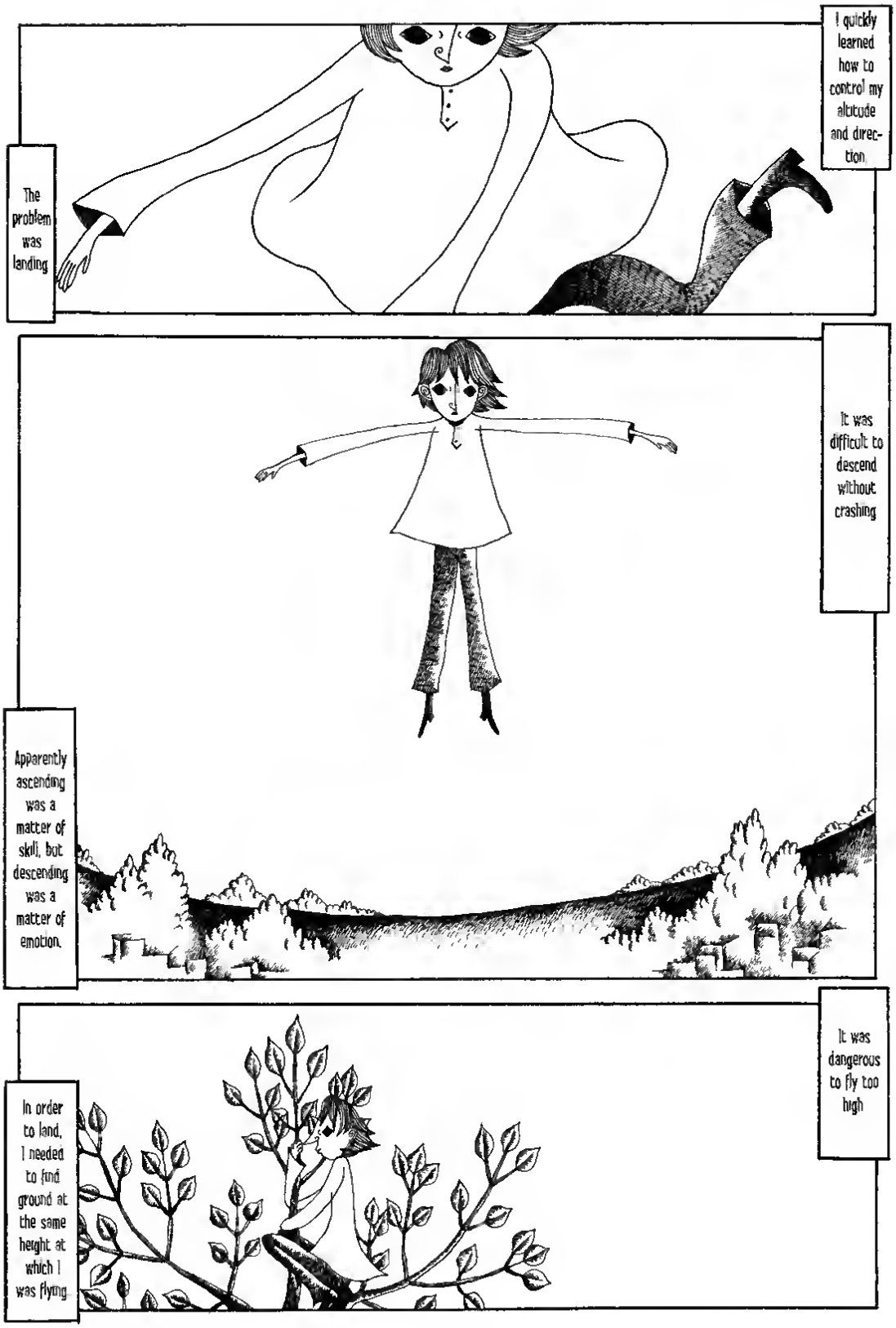

..suddenly the ground disappeared beneath my feet..
As I walked along, thinking maybe I could take it home and grow it and make some money...
...so this was a nice discovery.
...and I was floating
Oh
I just hadn't noticed the downward slope, that's all

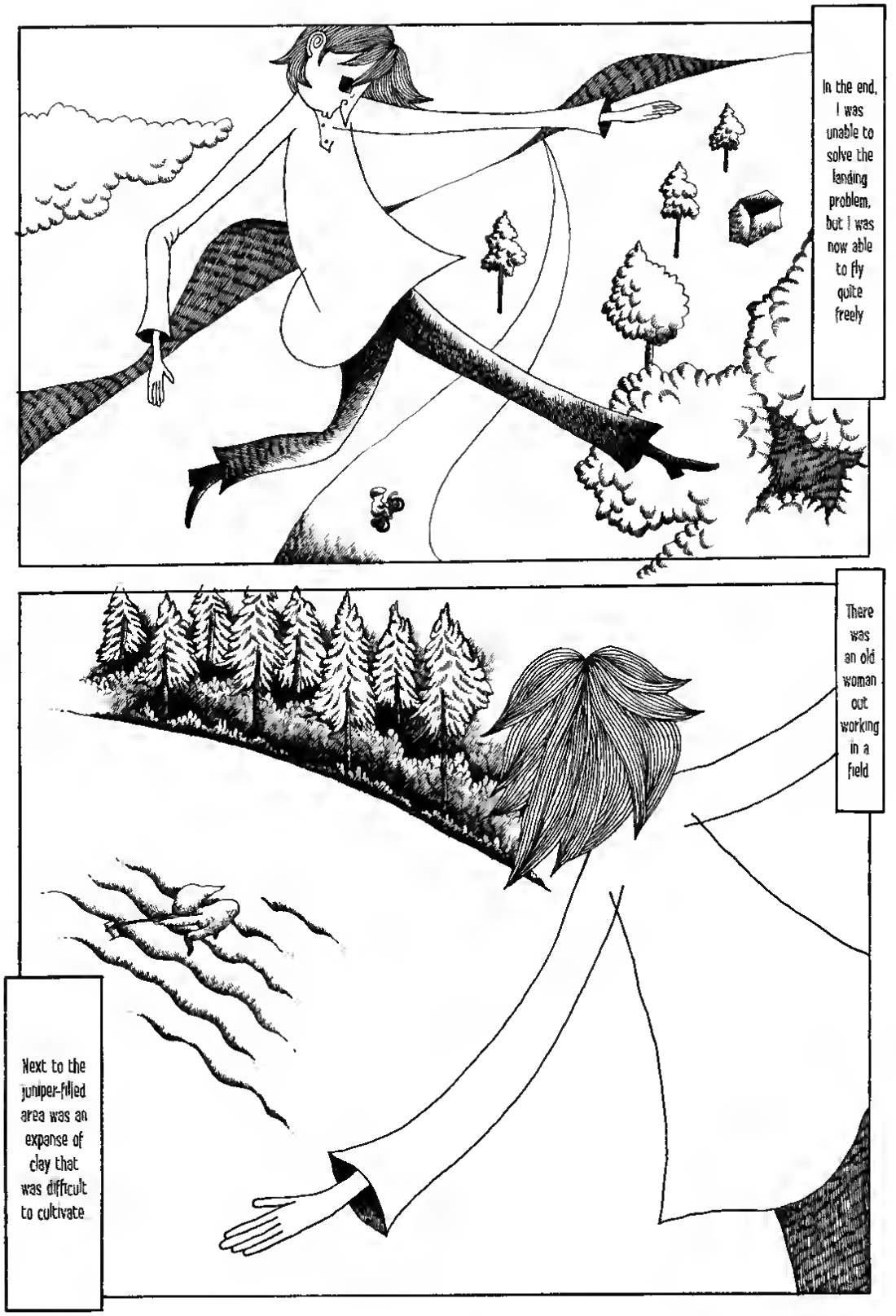

I was flying
And then another
I took a step
I had stepped into the sky
I flew for about three meters
and then crashed.

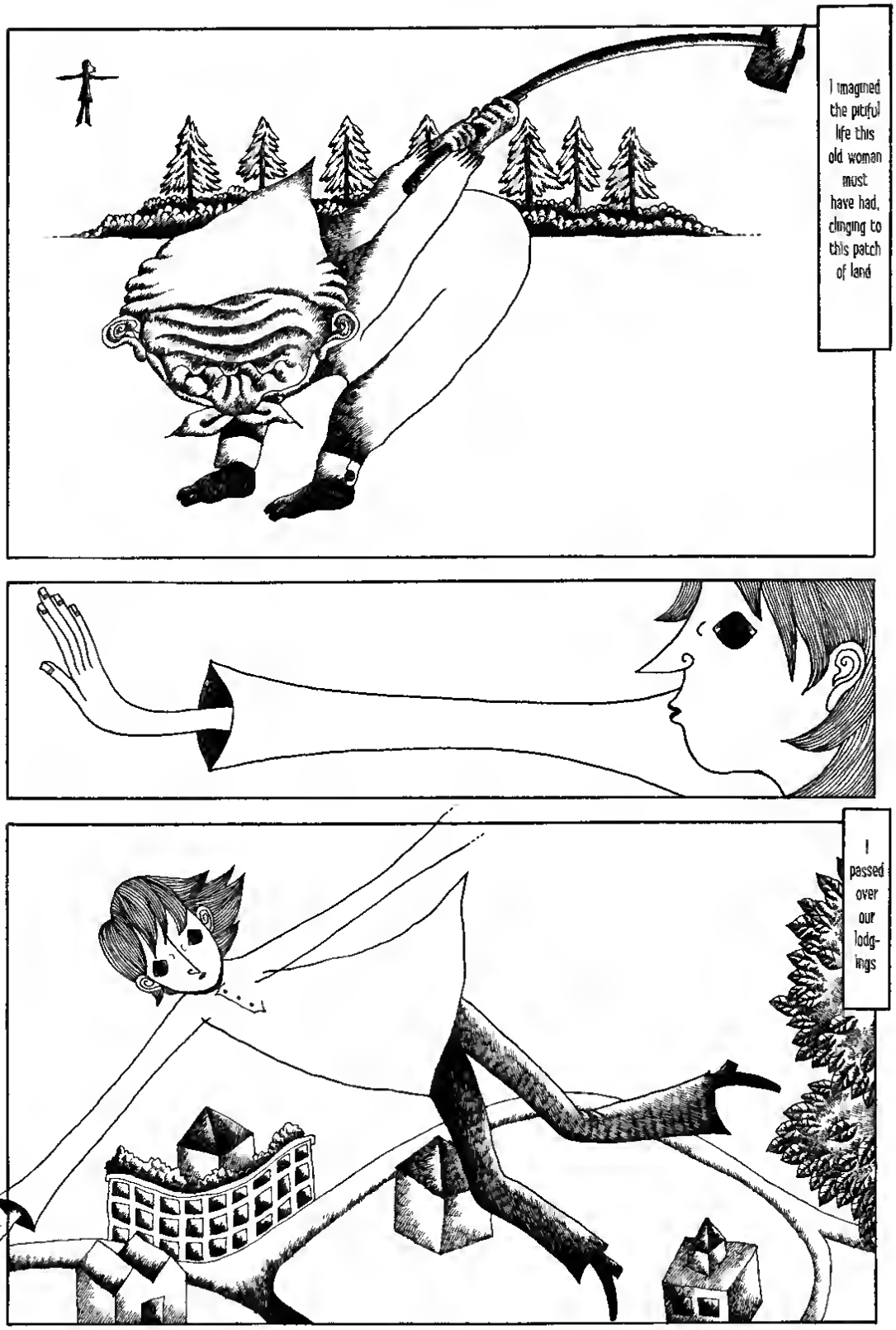

I practiced over and over...
...and my confidence grew
When the sun went down I returned to my lodgings.
Apparently I'd come here on vacation with my co-workers. I'd gotten bored with card games and gone out for a walk alone

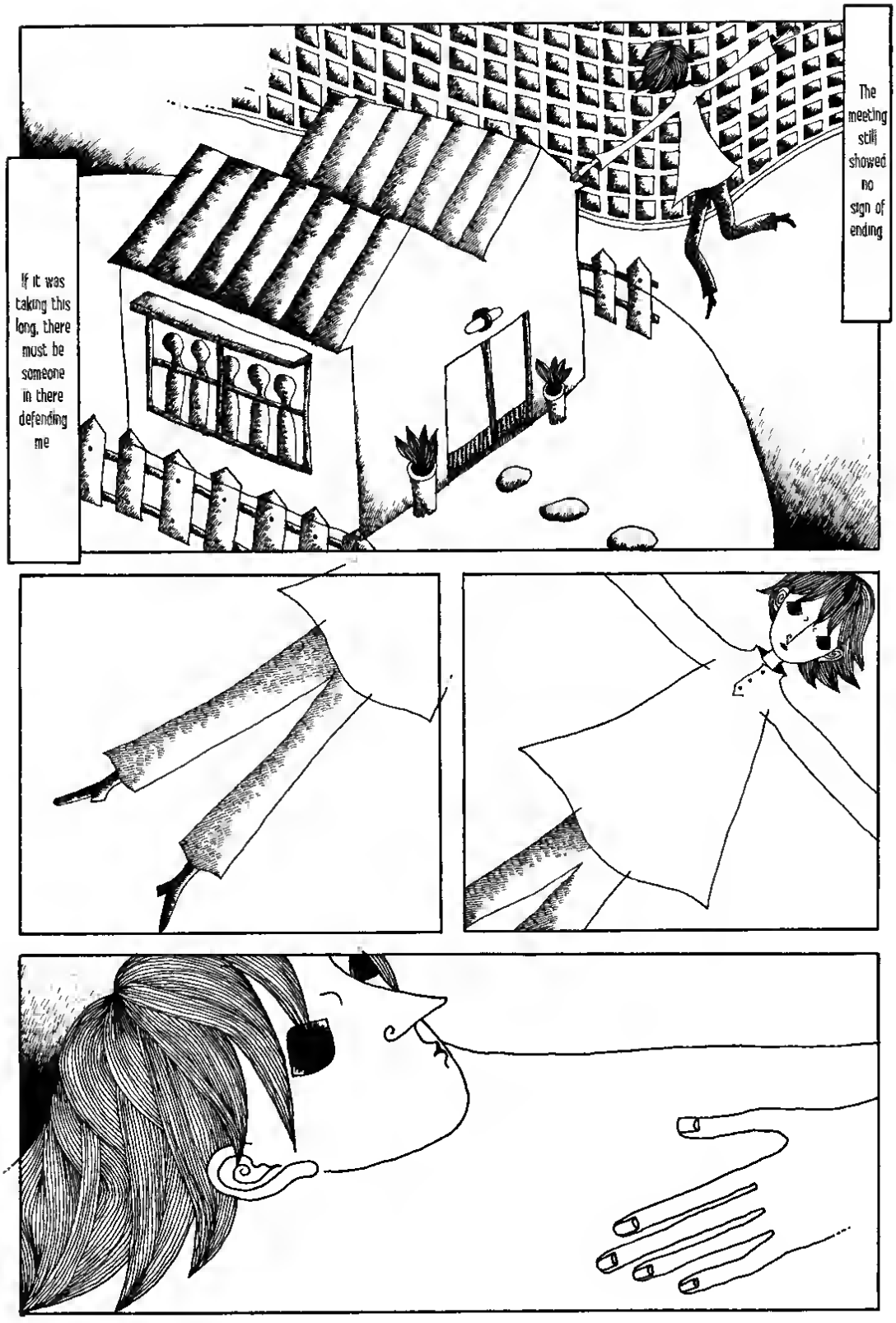

When they noticed I was back, they began whispering amongst themselves
The topic appeared to be what was to be done with me
There had been some sort of meeting while I was out
I'd thought this was just an ordinary vacation, but apparently it was some sort of training.
It would seem that I'd missed some sort of important meeting

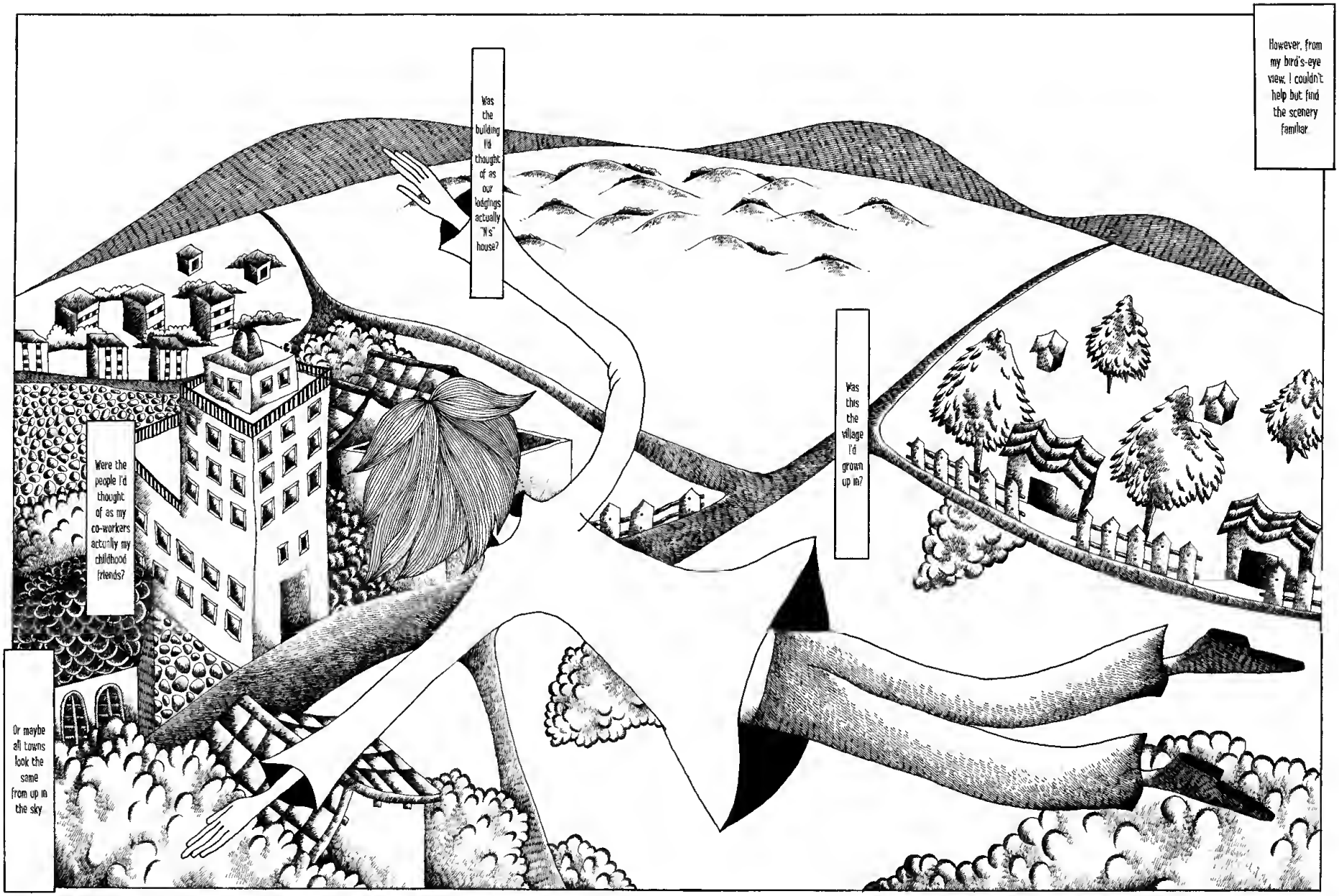

In the morning, I began seriously practicing how to fly
The meeting was still going on.
They were probably discussing letting me go
It didn't concern me.
Now that I could fly, there was no reason to continue working at my job
I could probably make a living as a celebrity now, or I could offer flying lessons or something
That solved any eco-nomic prob-lems.

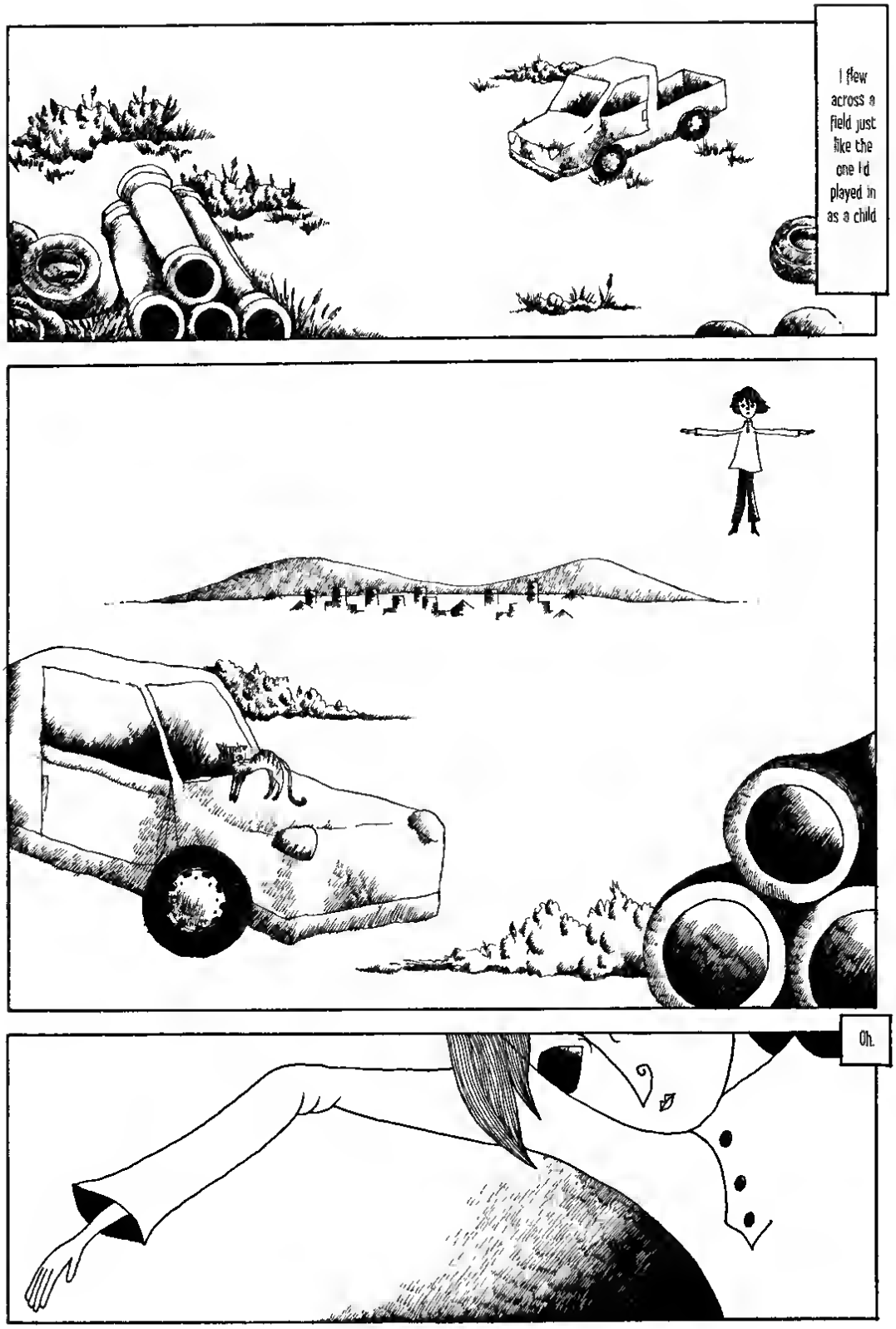

I quickly learned how to control my altitude and direction
The problem was landing
It was difficult to descend without crashing
Apparently ascending was a matter of skill, but descending was a matter of emotion.
It was dangerous to fly too high
In order to land, I needed to find ground at the same height at which I was flying.

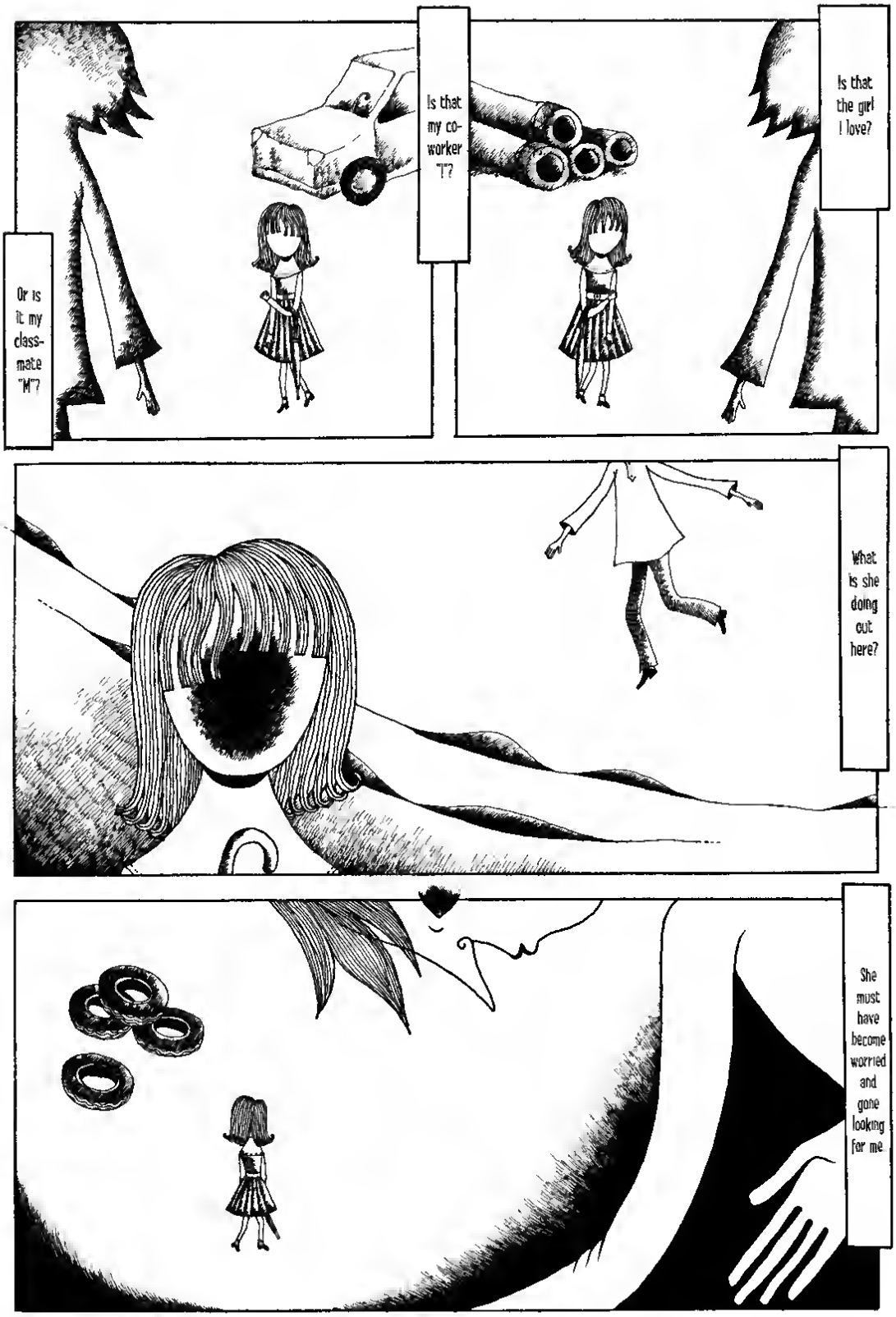

In the end, I was unable to solve the landing problem, but I was now able to fly quite freely
There was an old woman out working in a field
Next to the juniper-filled area was an expanse of clay that was difficult to cultivate

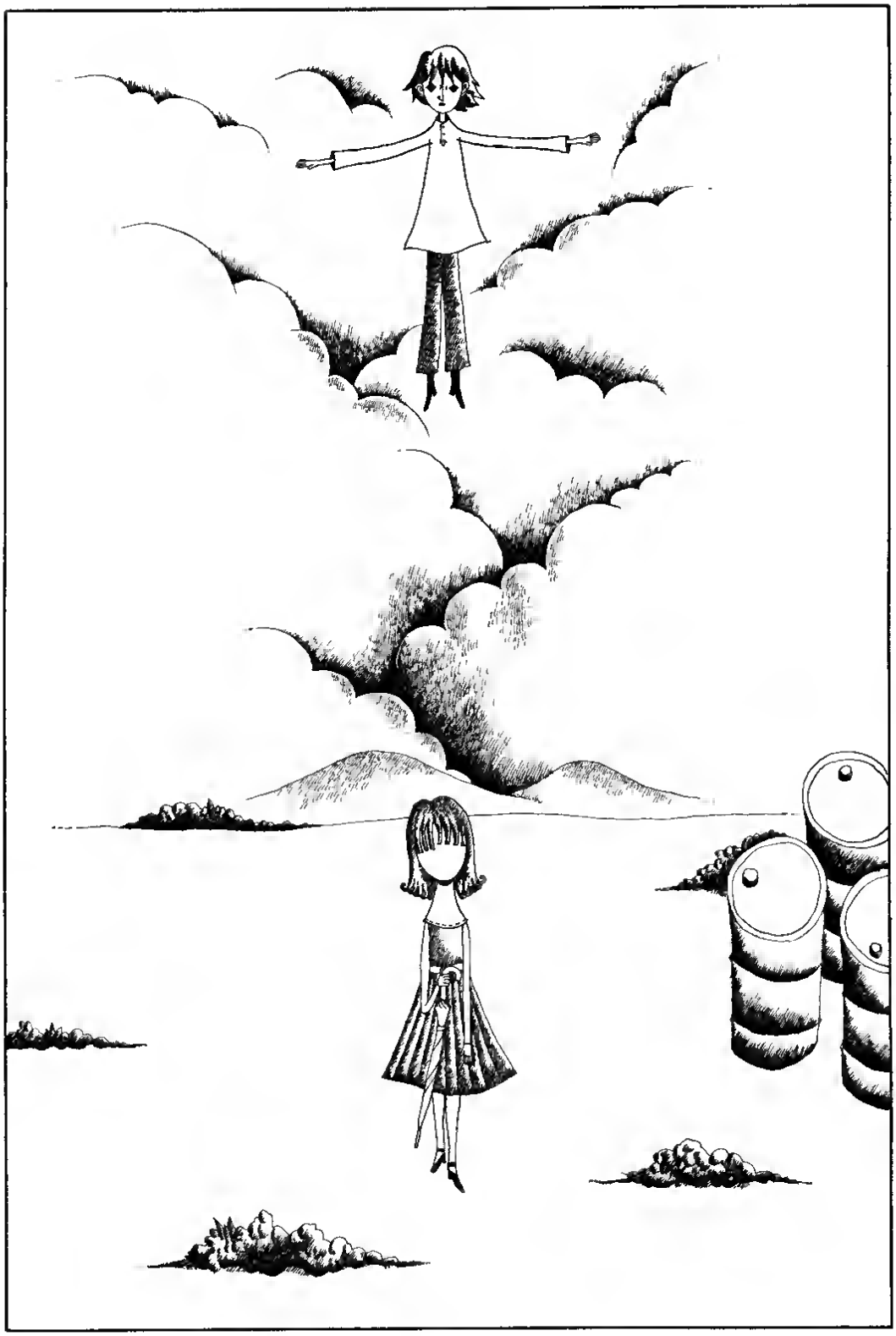

I imagined the pitiful life this old woman must have had, clinging to this patch of land
I passed over our lodgings

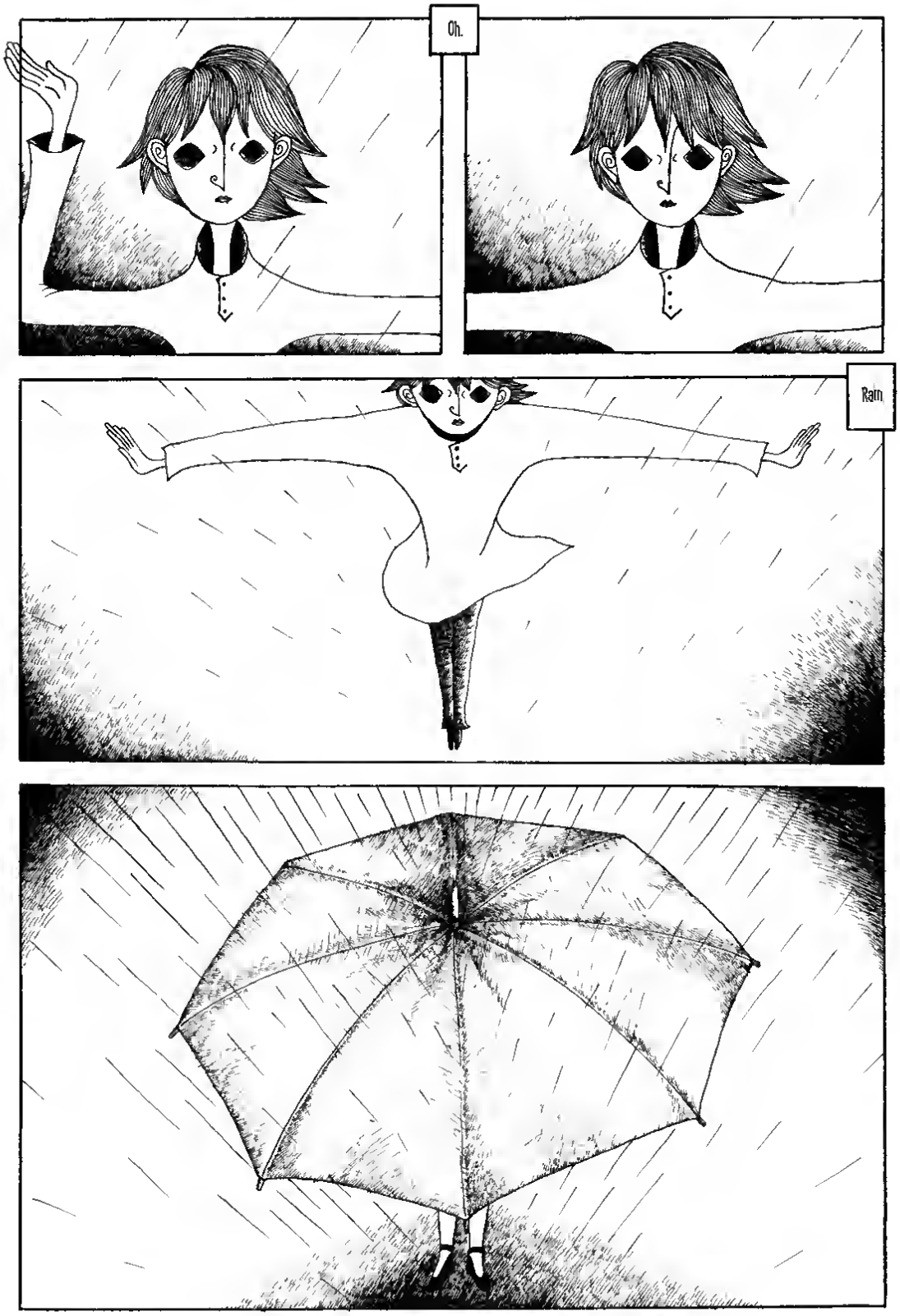

The meeting still showed no sign of ending
If it was taking this long, there must be someone in there defending me

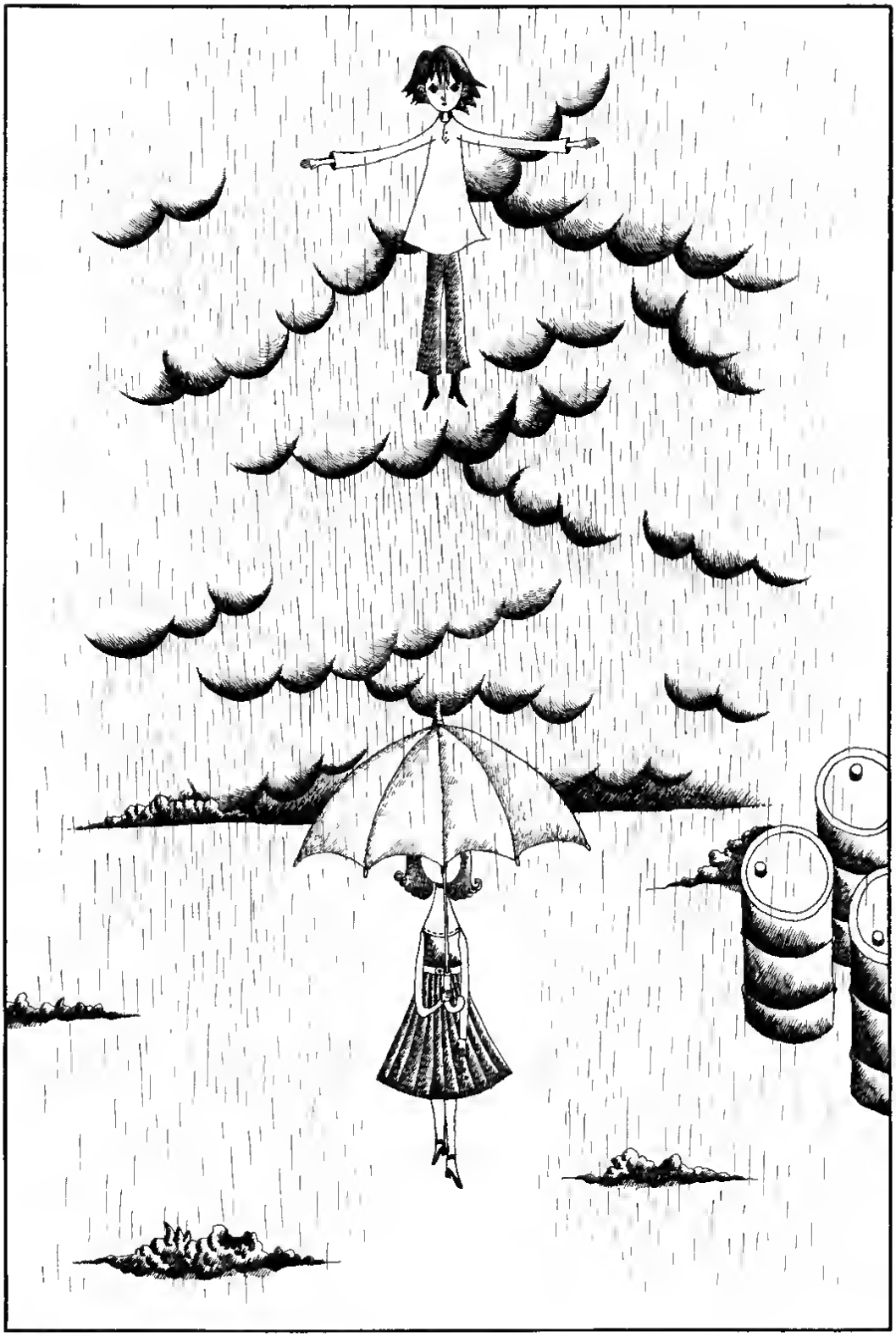

However, from my bird's-eye view, I couldn't help but find the scenery familiar
Was the building I'd thought of as our lodgings actually "N's" house?
Was this the village I'd grown up in?
Were the people I'd thought of as my co-workers actually my childhood friends?
Or maybe all towns look the same from up in the sky


I flew across a field just like the one I'd played in as a child
Oh.


Is that the girl I love?
Is that my co-worker "T"?
Or is it my class-mate "M"?
What is she doing out here?
She must have become worried and gone looking for me

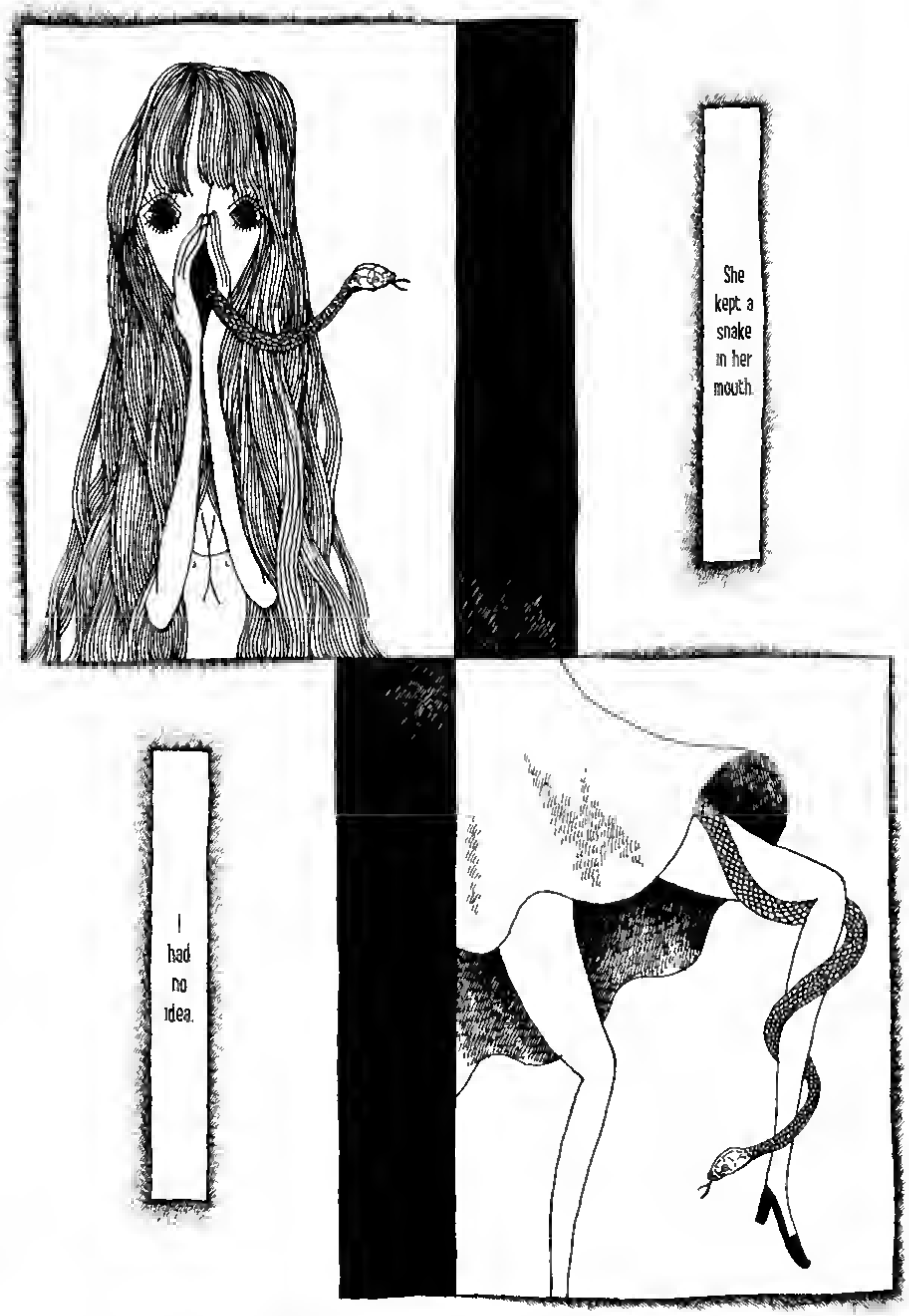


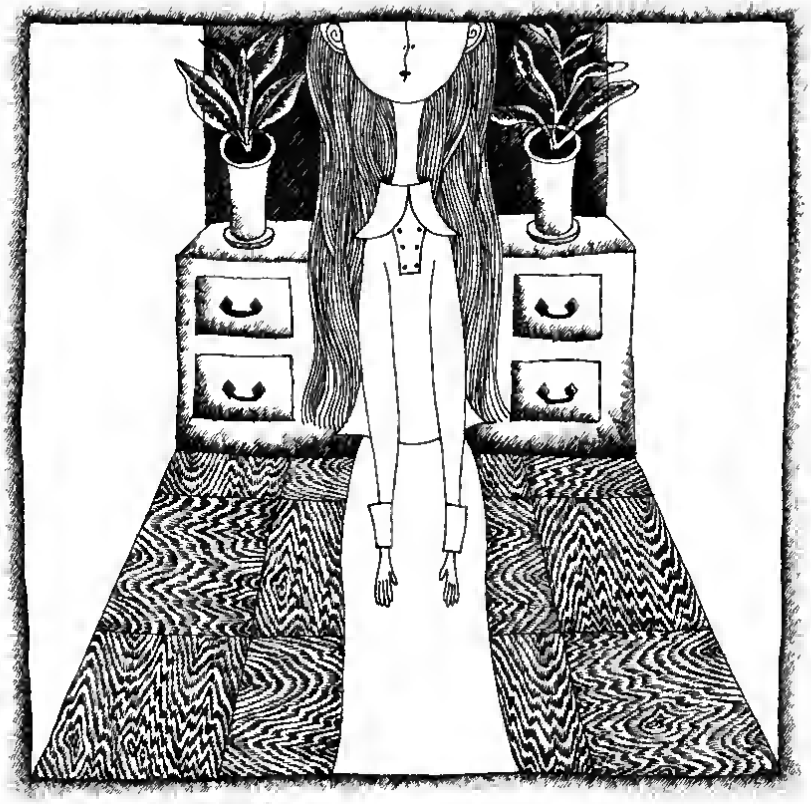

Oh.
Ram



THE END

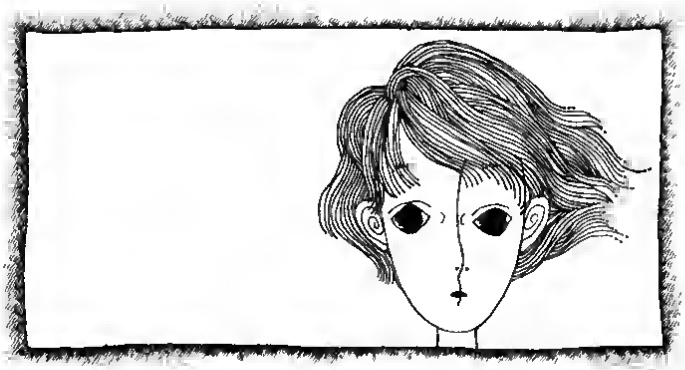
Snake Woman

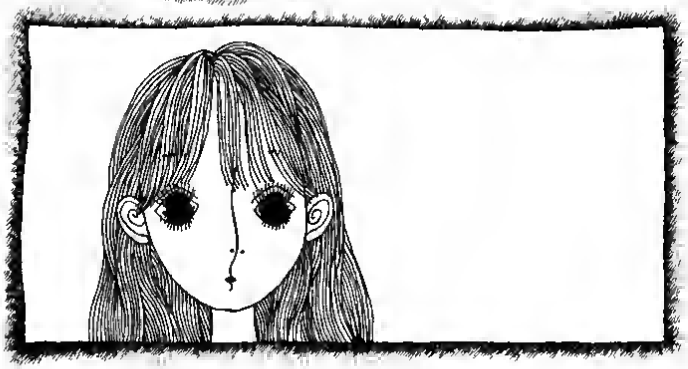




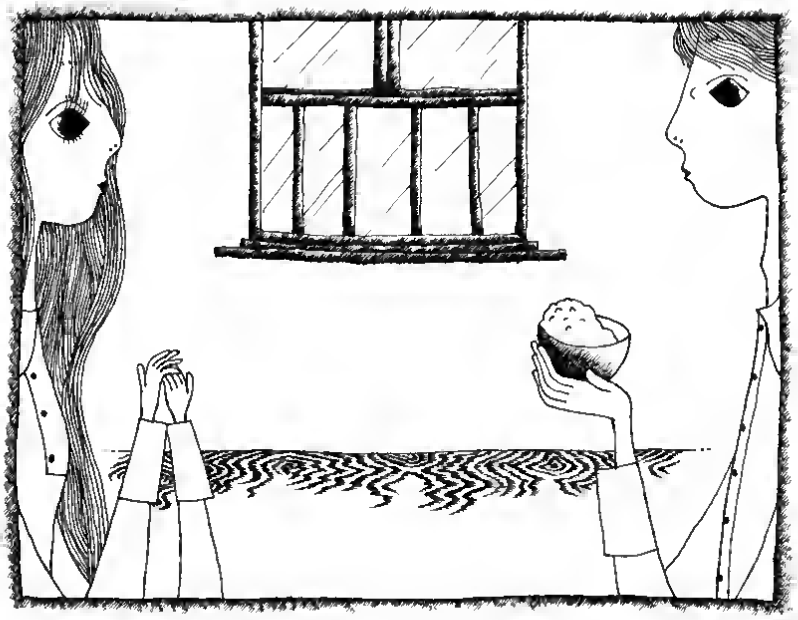
She stopped talking. She stopped opening her mouth.

I thought she was mad about something, so I asked her why she was mad.



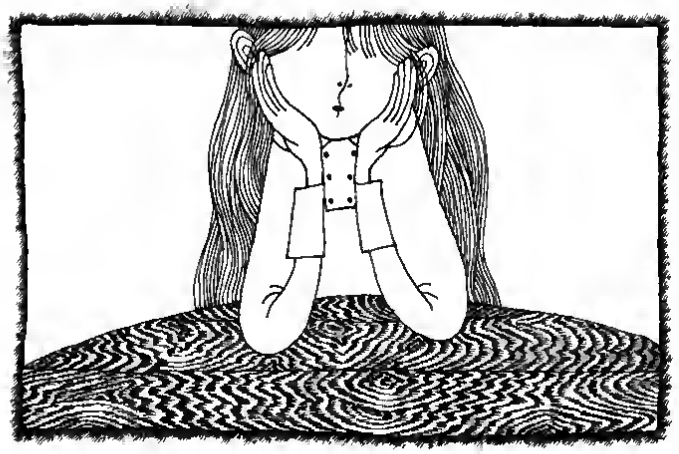


She shook her head as if to say, I'm not mad.



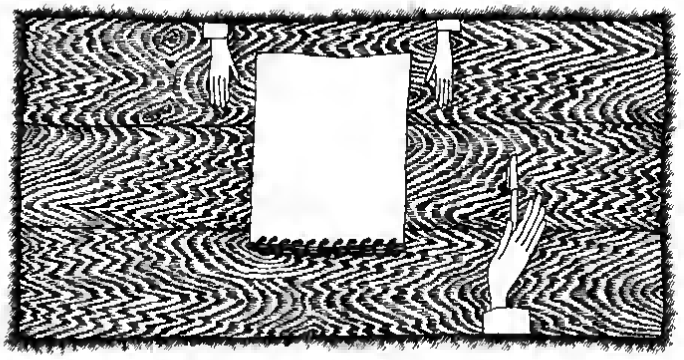
She stopped eating. She continued to cook for me, but then just watched me eat.

I didn't like it. We were living together, so we should at least eat together.



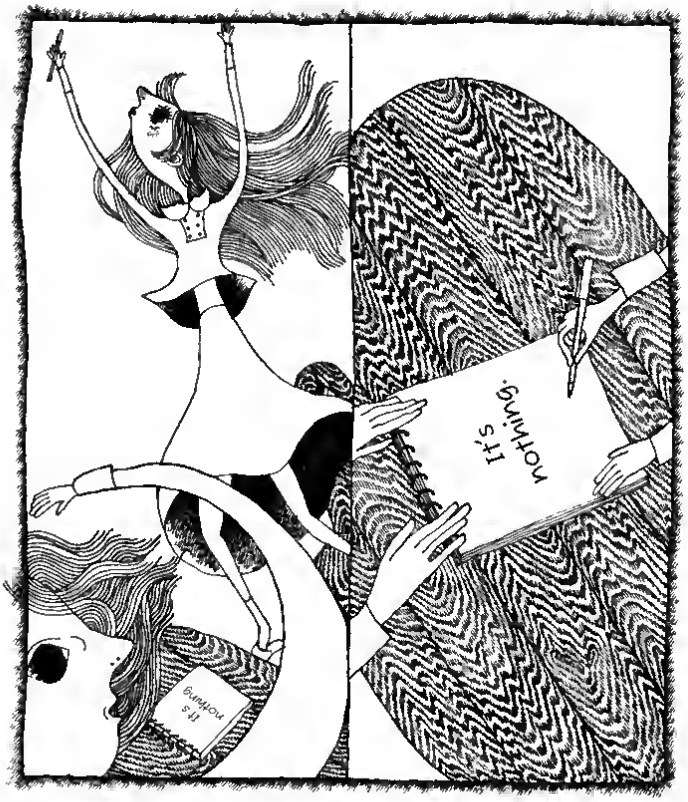
I worried she would lose weight. However, days passed and she didn't lose any weight, so I figured she must be eating when I wasn't looking.

It made me sad.



She wouldn't open her mouth, so I tried to get her to communicate in writing

What on earth is the matter? Why won't you open your mouth?

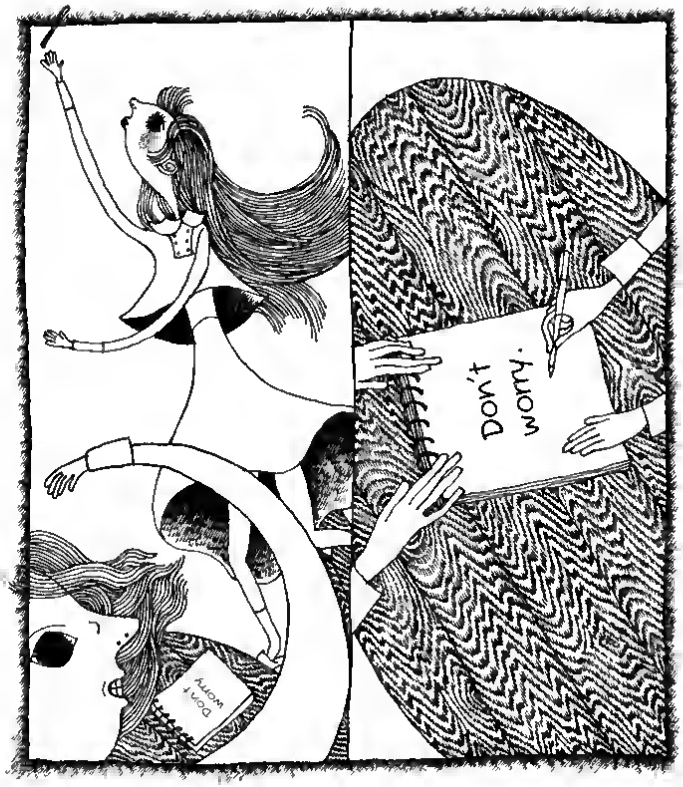


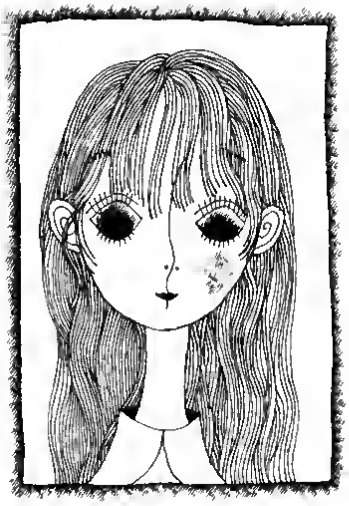
It's nothing, she wrote

It made me angry, so I hit her. How could she say it was nothing when I was so worried and sad?

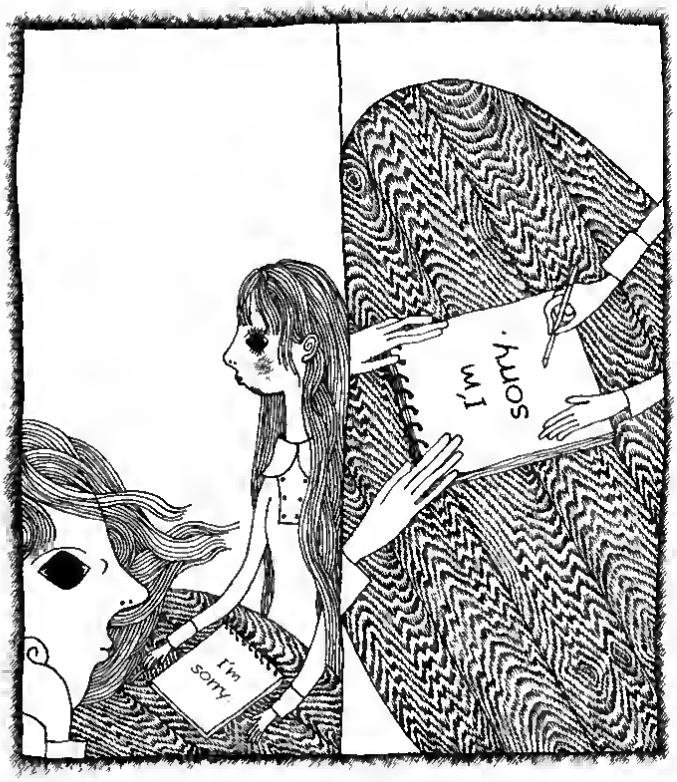
Don't worry,
she wrote

I hit her again.
You'll die if you get
a stuffed-up nose,
I threatened her.



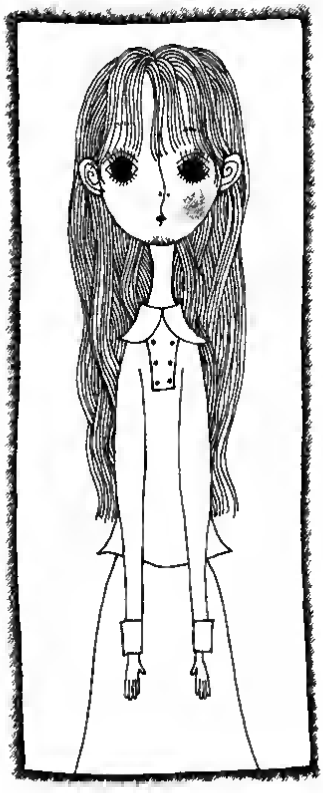


She smiled sadly
I'd never seen a
woman smile
after being hit,
so I hit her once
more for fun

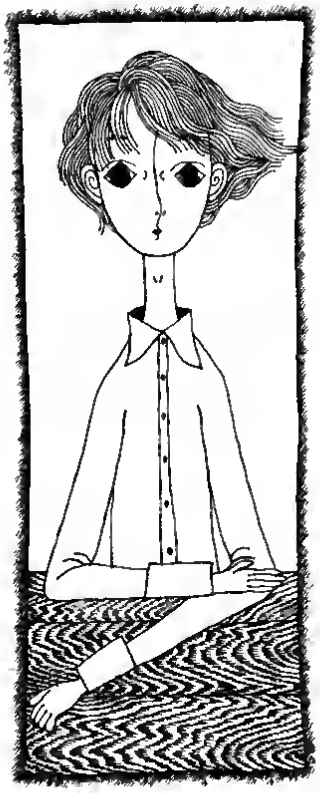


I'm sorry, she wrote.

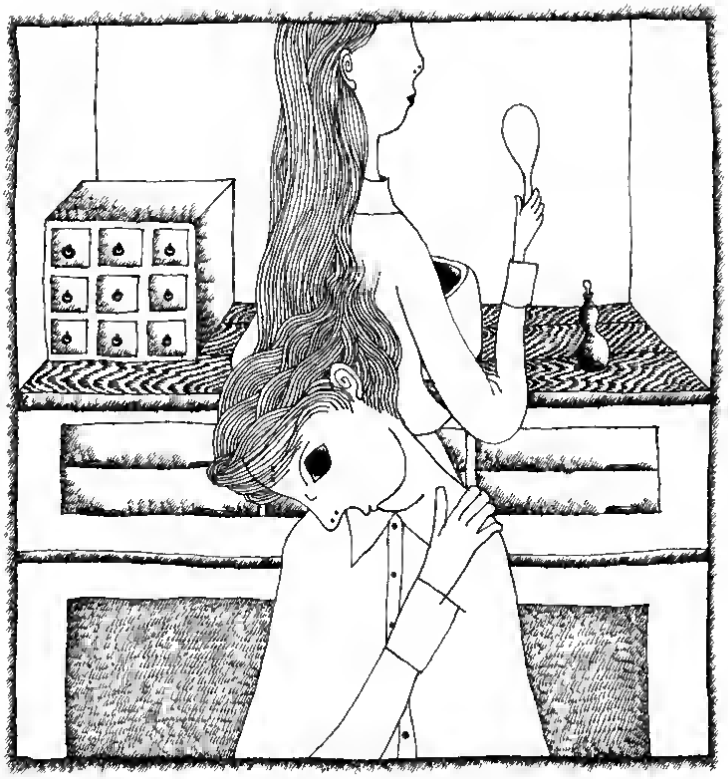
Since she apologized, I decided I wouldn't hit her again.



She looked pitiful.

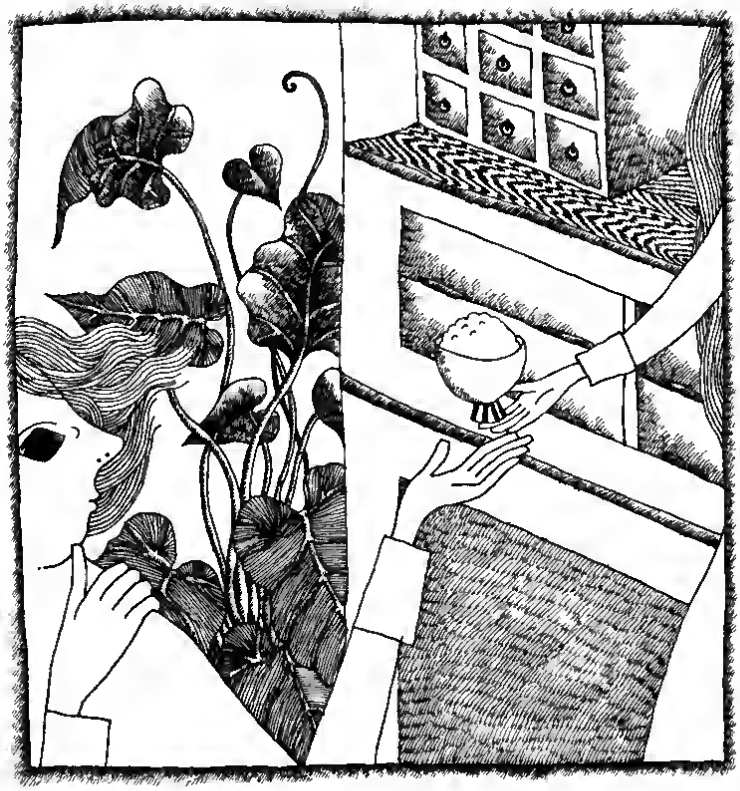


I felt better.



I felt like she must be hiding something. I had no idea it would be so hard to live with a woman who kept secrets.

She didn't open her mouth. I had no idea it would be so hard to live with a woman who didn't talk.



I was determined to catch her in the act of opening her mouth.

I didn't like it, so I decided to find out what she was hiding

That night when I pretended to sleep, she got up and went to the kitchen I figured she must be hungry

She opened the fridge and took out a fish cake

I couldn't believe she was eating fish cakes of all things. There's nothing sadder than a woman eating fish cakes in front of the fridge in the middle of the night.

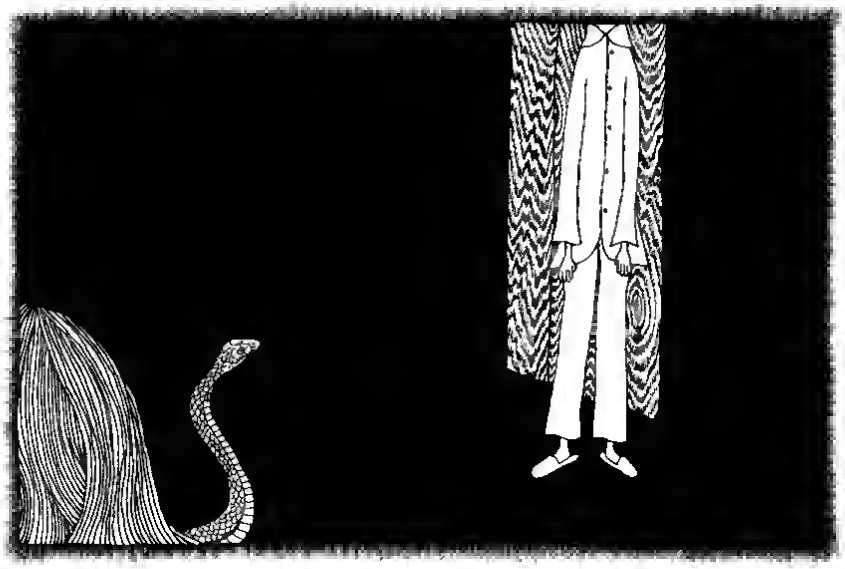
It brought tears to my eyes

Without thinking I called out to her

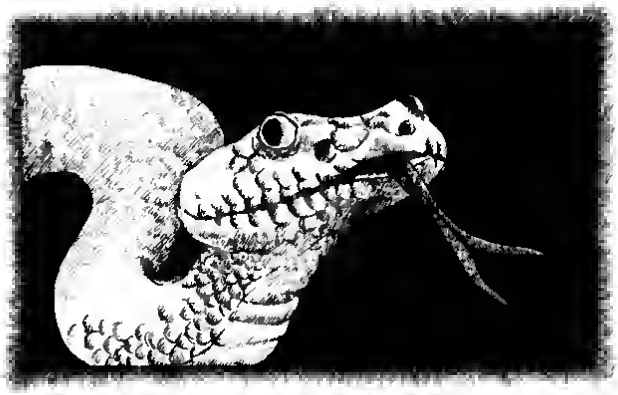
It was a snake

There was a snake in her mouth eating the fish cake

She was crying silently



Its head was triangle-shaped, so it was probably poisonous

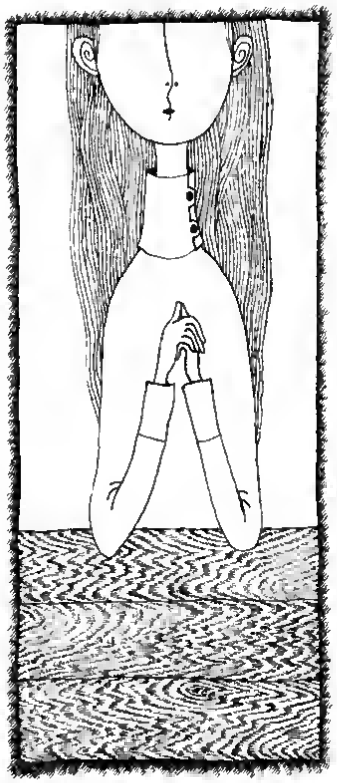


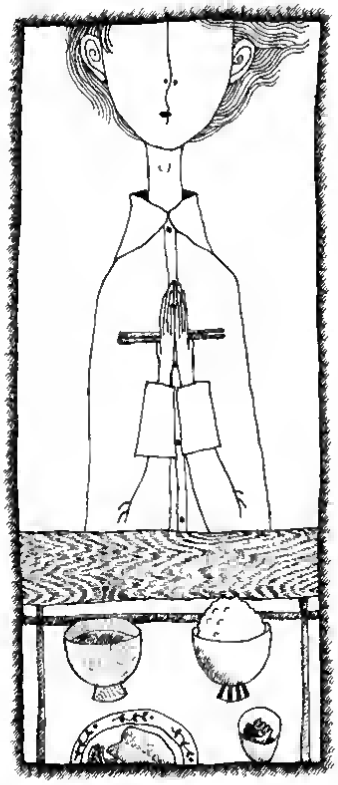
I was so scared, I went back to bed

I was relieved. What if the snake came out and bit me?

The next morning, she still didn't open her mouth.

But I knew I would live with her for the rest of my life

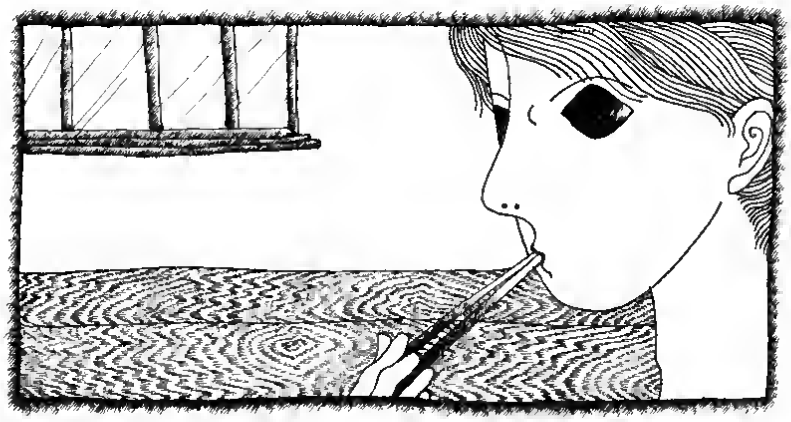


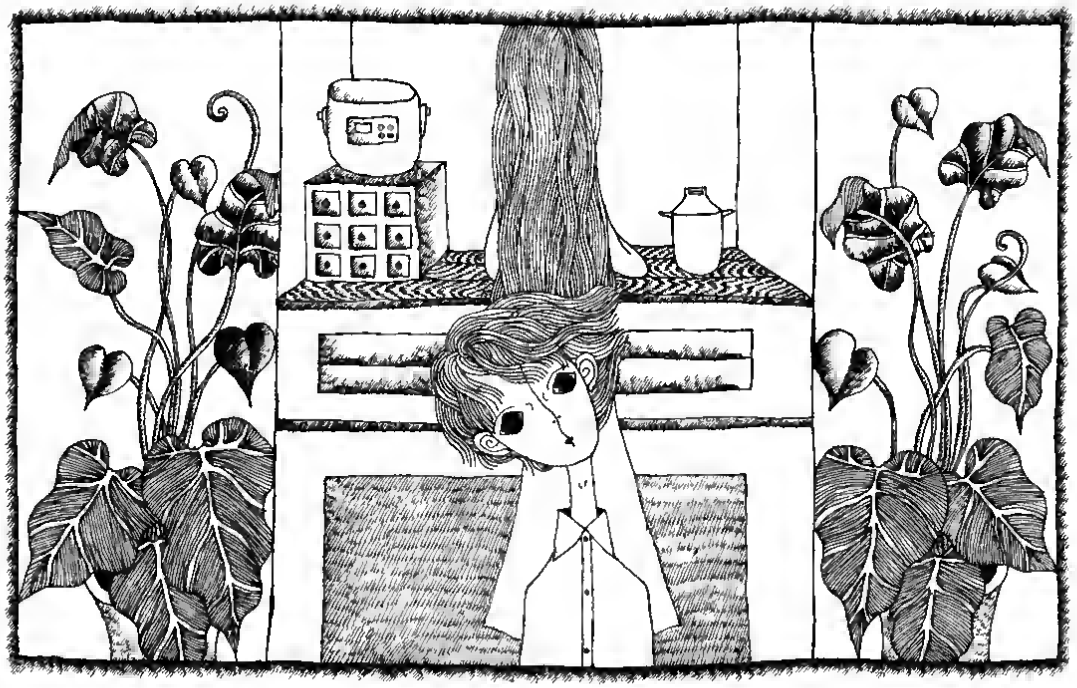


I stopped speaking, too. I had nothing to say to a woman with a snake in her mouth

I couldn't imagine there was anyone else who would look after a woman with a snake in her mouth.

I felt sorry for her.

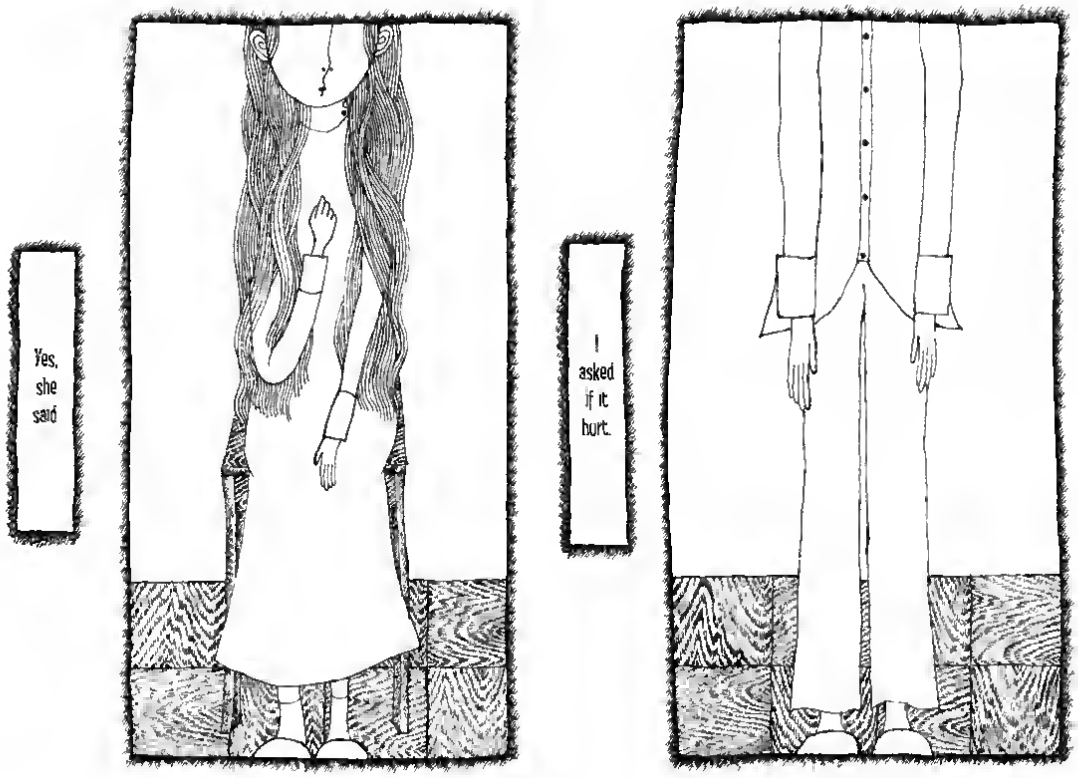


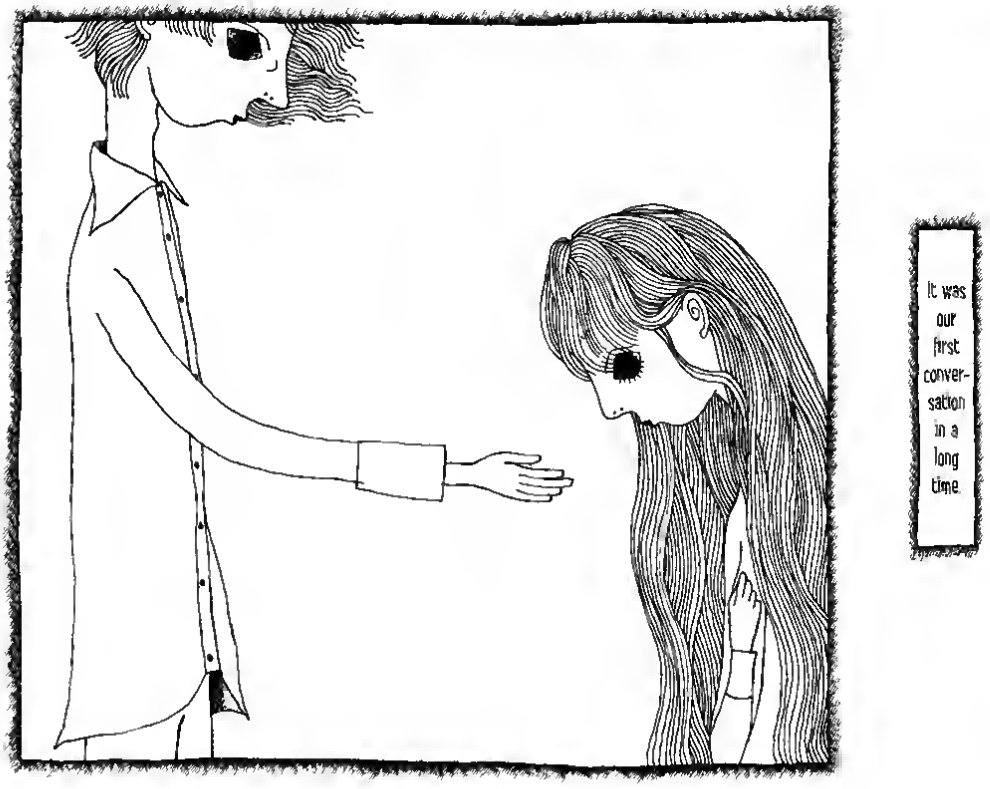


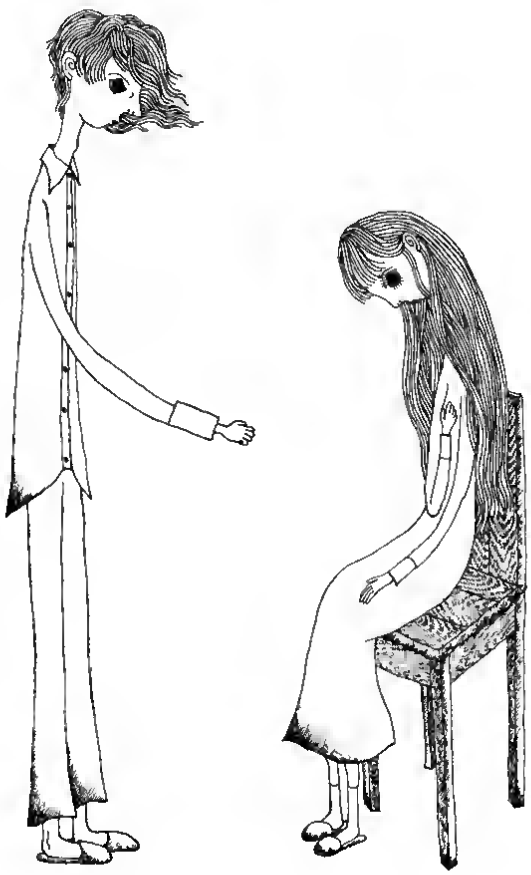
Just a moment ago she let out a strange sound Startled, I went over and saw her clutching her chest.

She quietly opened her mouth.

"The snake bit me."

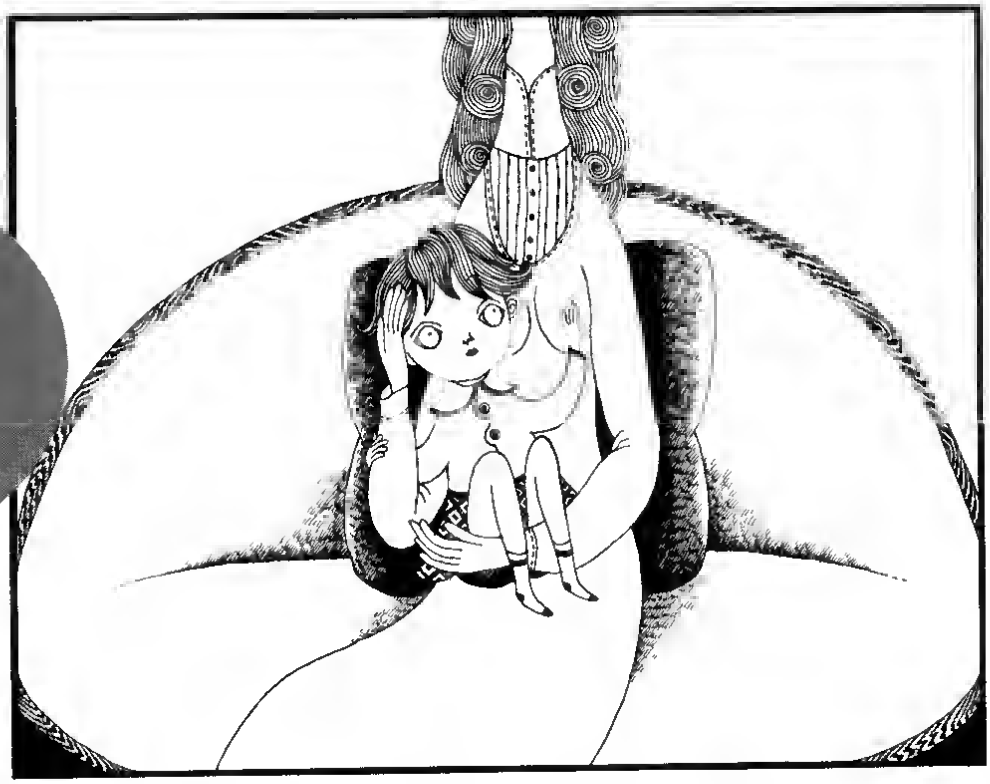

Yes, she said
I asked if it hurt.


It was our first conver-sation in a long time.



THE END

God of Death



I was scared

"There's no such thing."

"What about hell?"

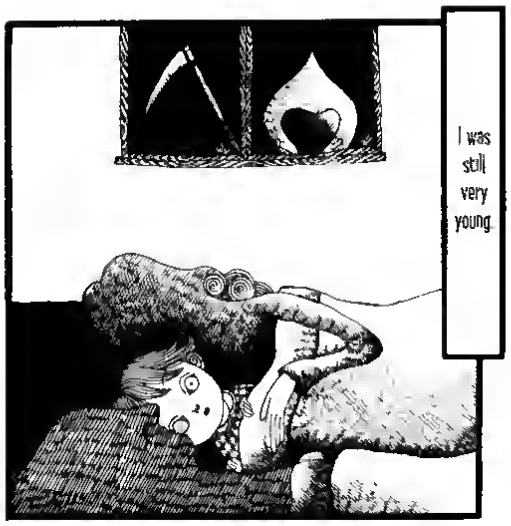
"There's no such thing."

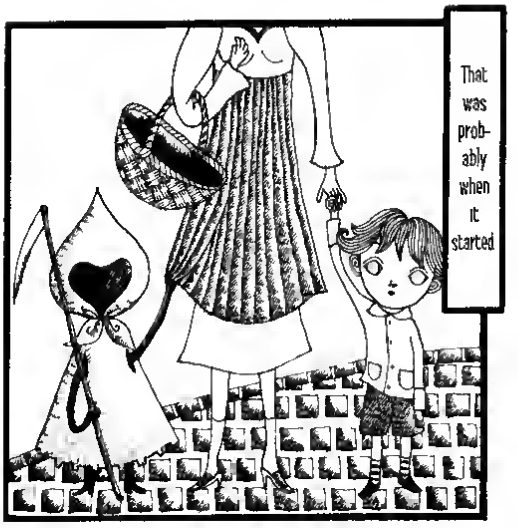
"What about heaven?"

"They become dirt."

"What happens when people die?"

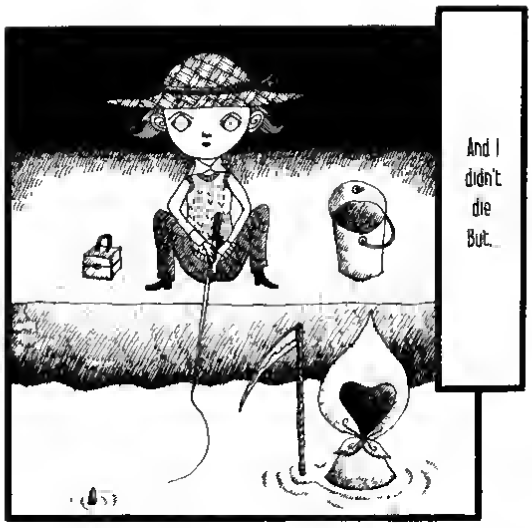
I asked my mother.

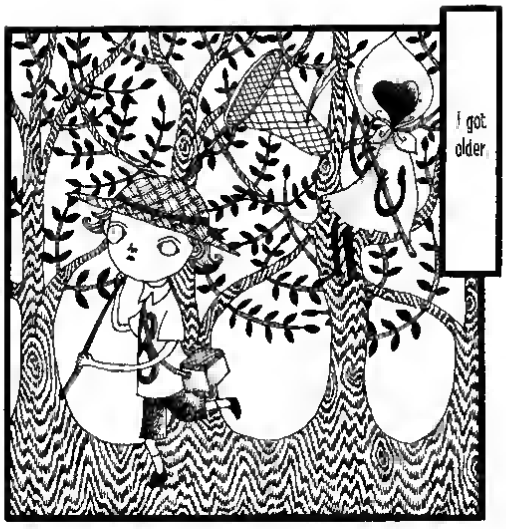

I was still very young.


That was probably when it started

He was always with me
And out of the blue, he would say...

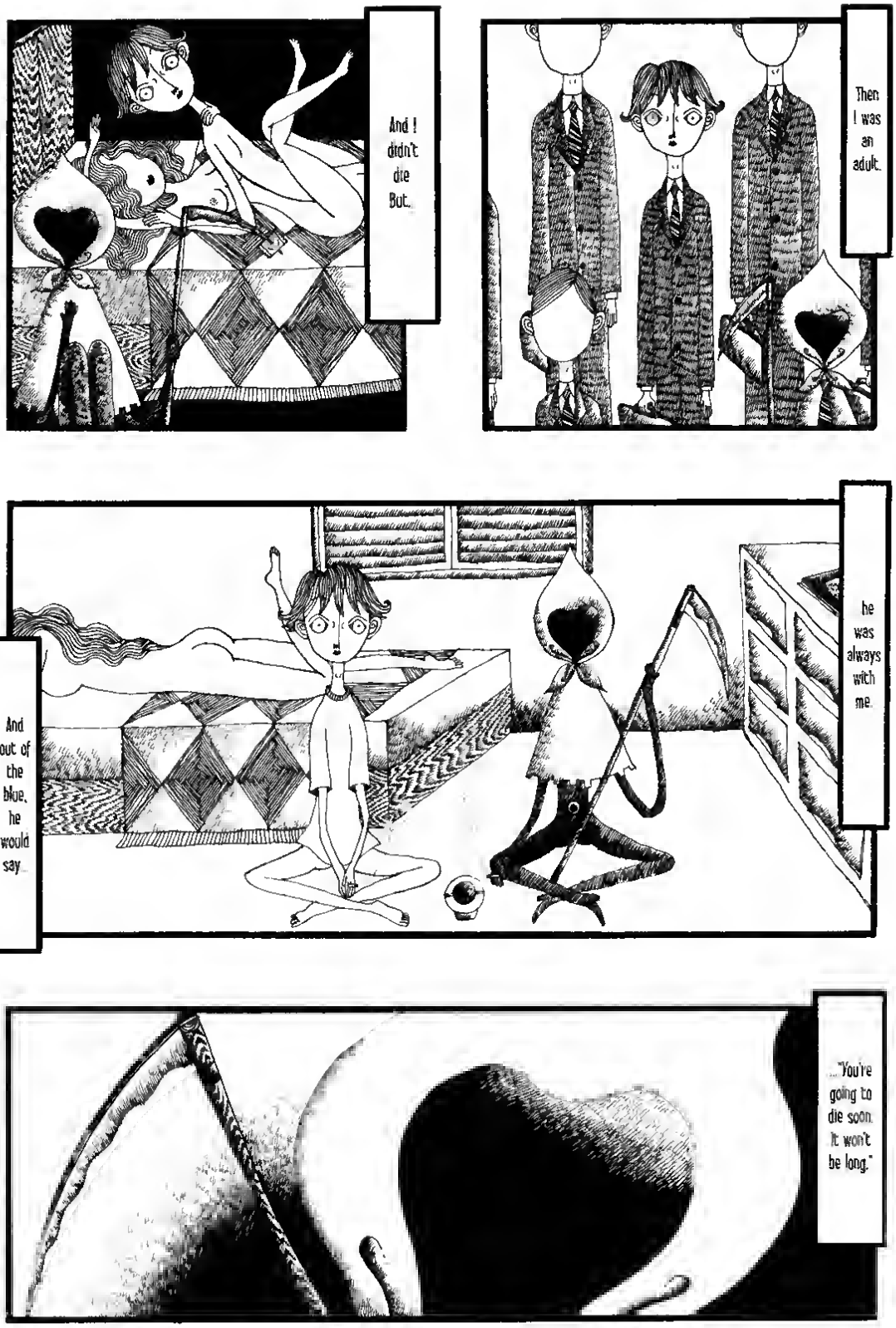
..."You're going to die soon. It won't be long."

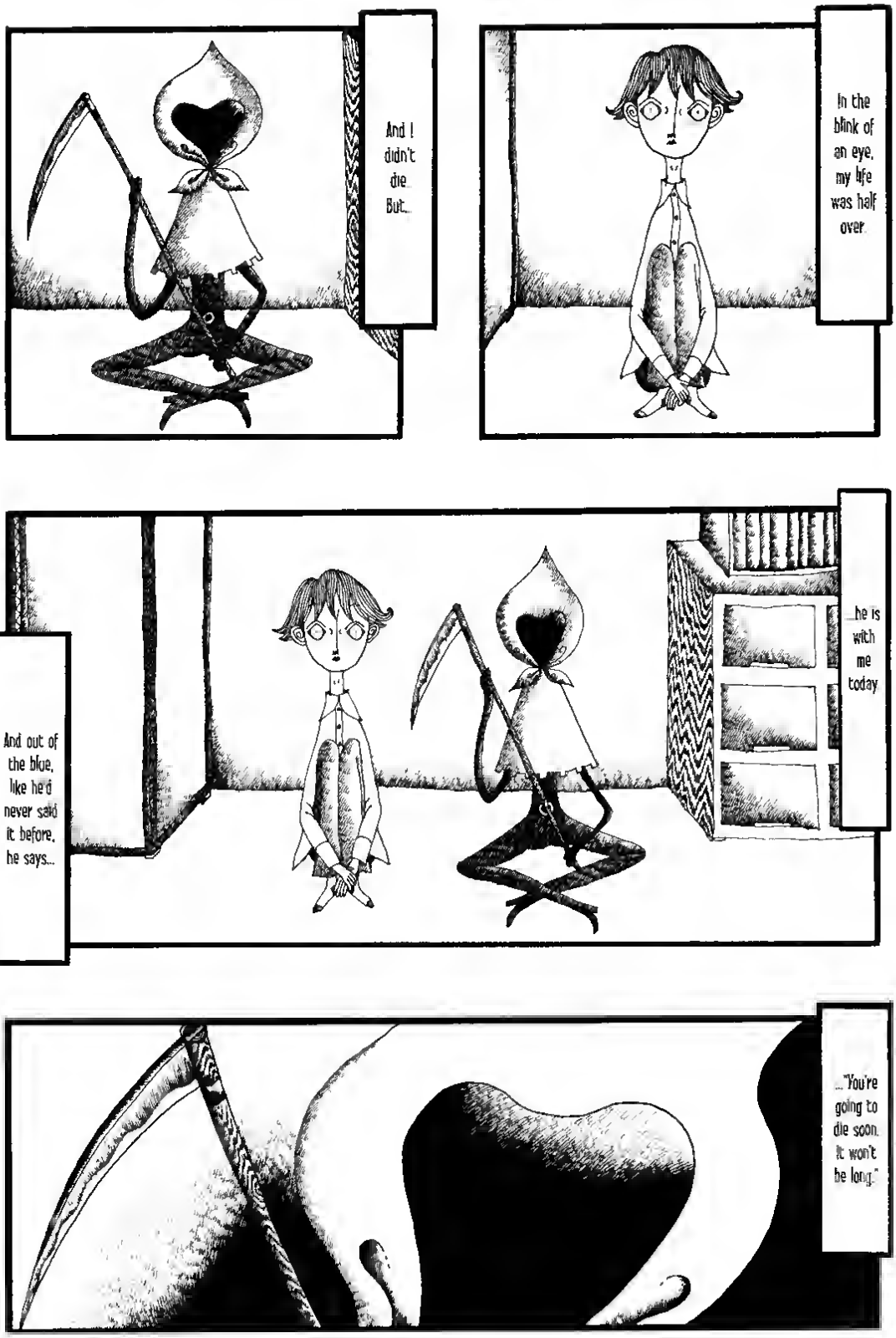

And I didn't die But...

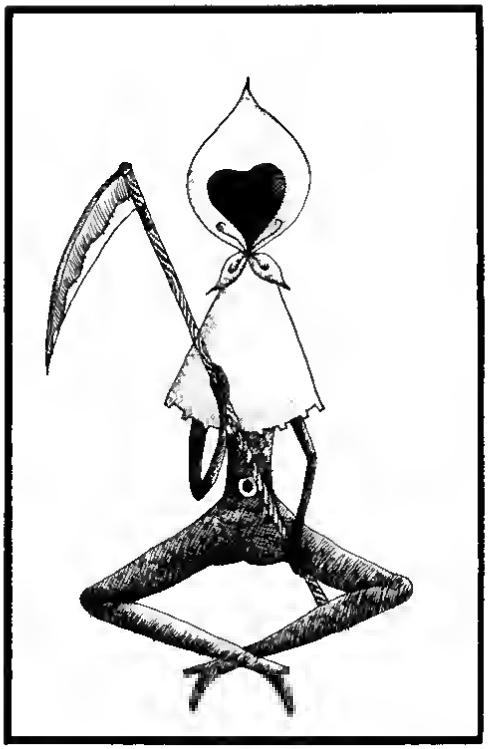

I got older

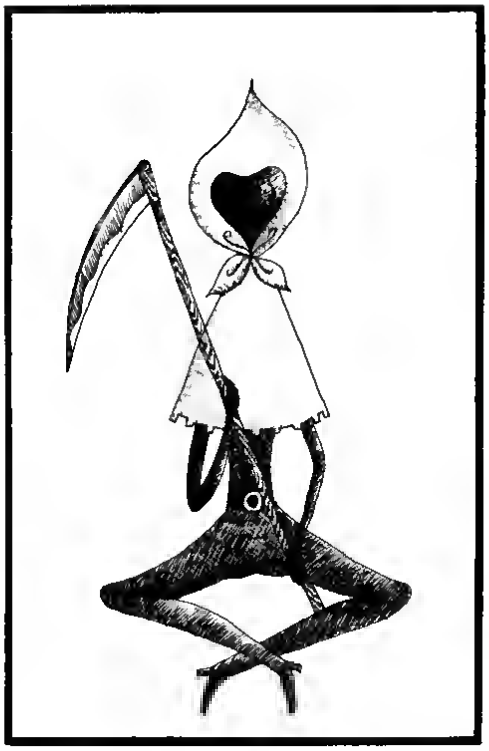
he was always with me.
And out of the blue, he would say...

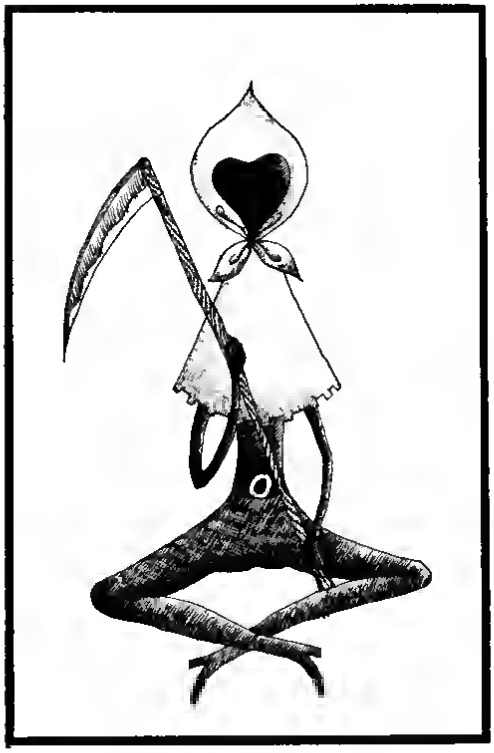
..."You're going to die soon. It won't be long."

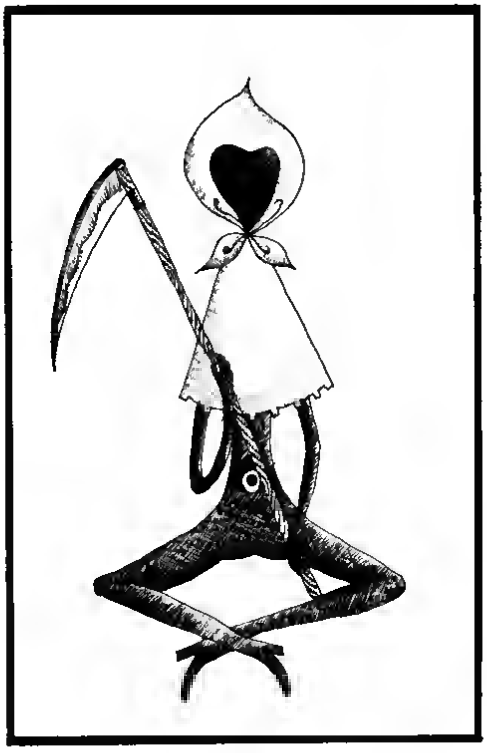

And I didn't die But...
Then I was an adult.
And out of the blue, he would say...
he was always with me.
..."You're going to die soon. It won't be long."

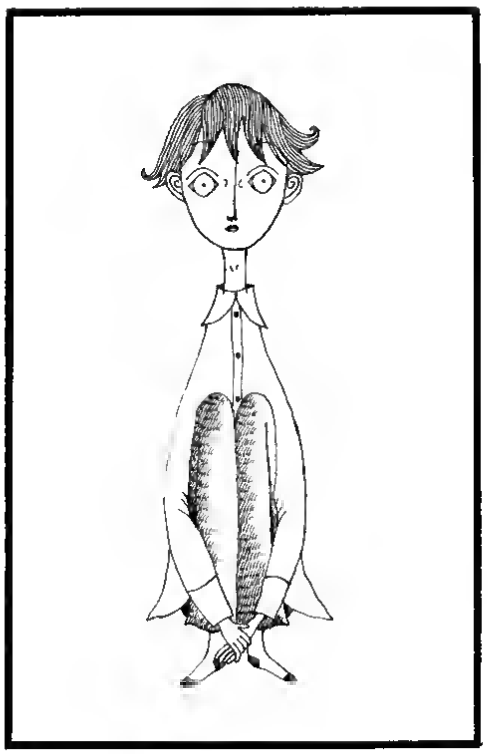

And I didn't die. But...
In the blink of an eye, my life was half over.
And out of the blue, like he'd never said it before, he says...
...he is with me today.
..."You're going to die soon. It won't be long."

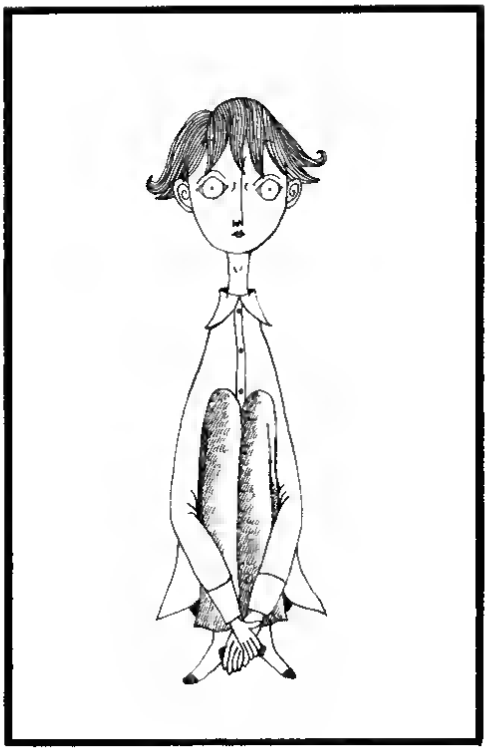


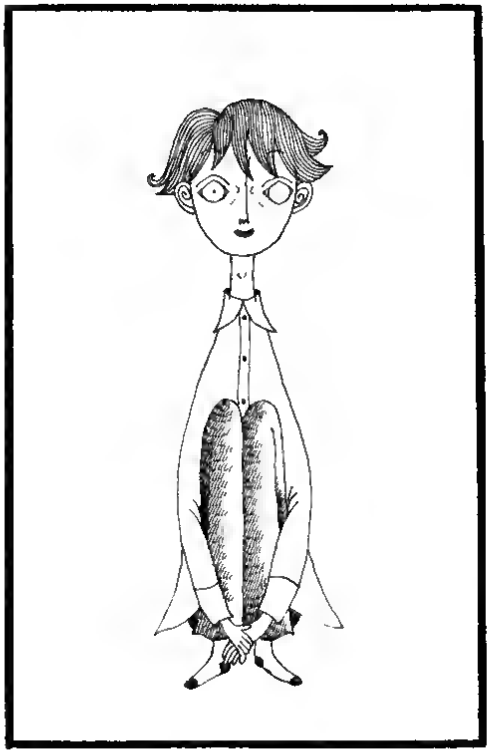


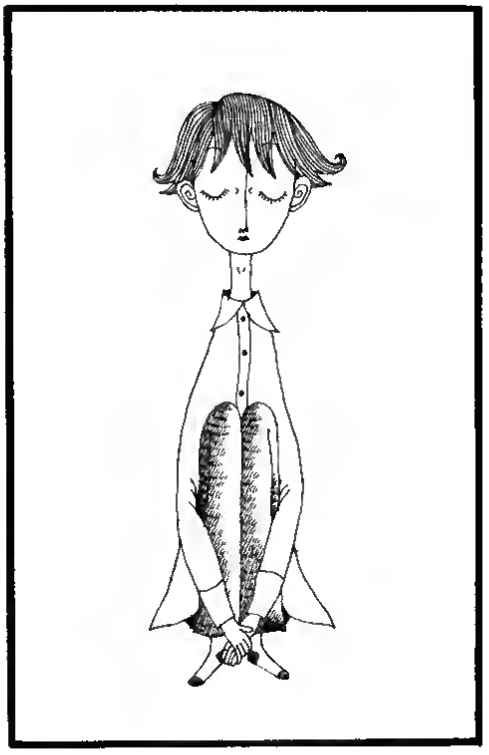


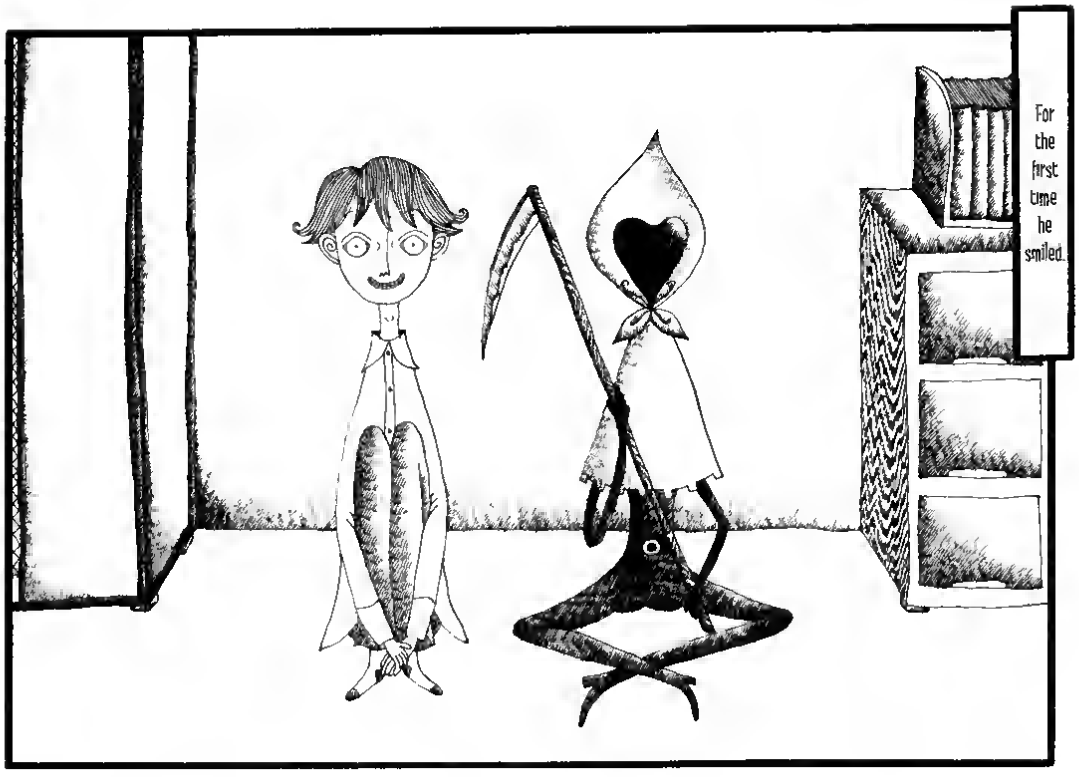


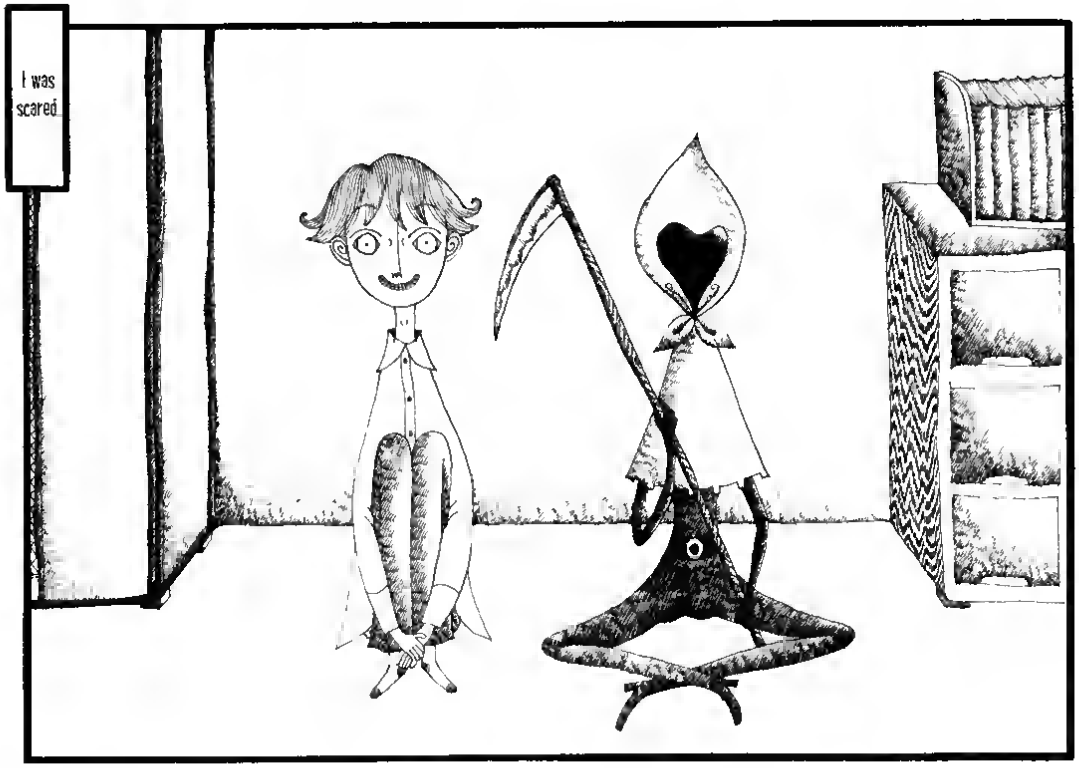






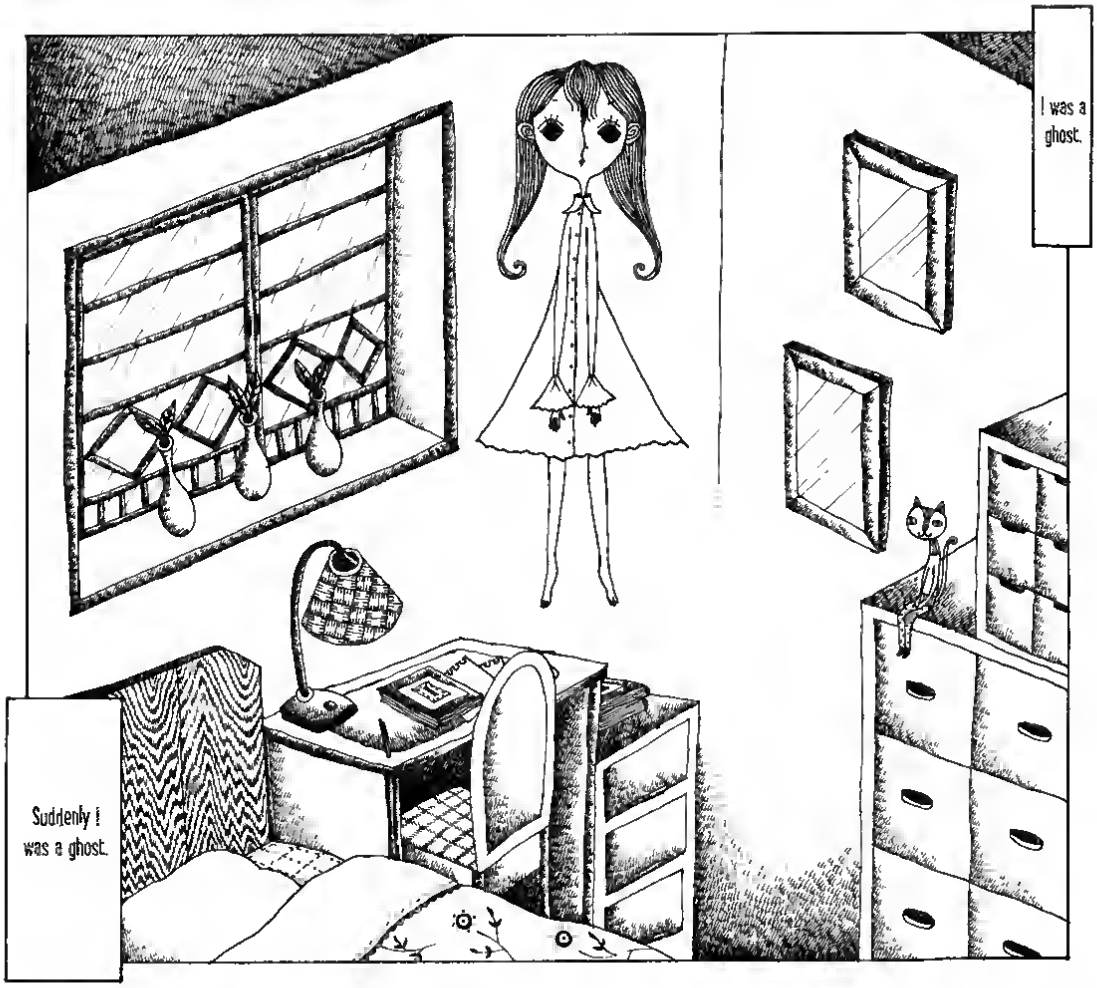


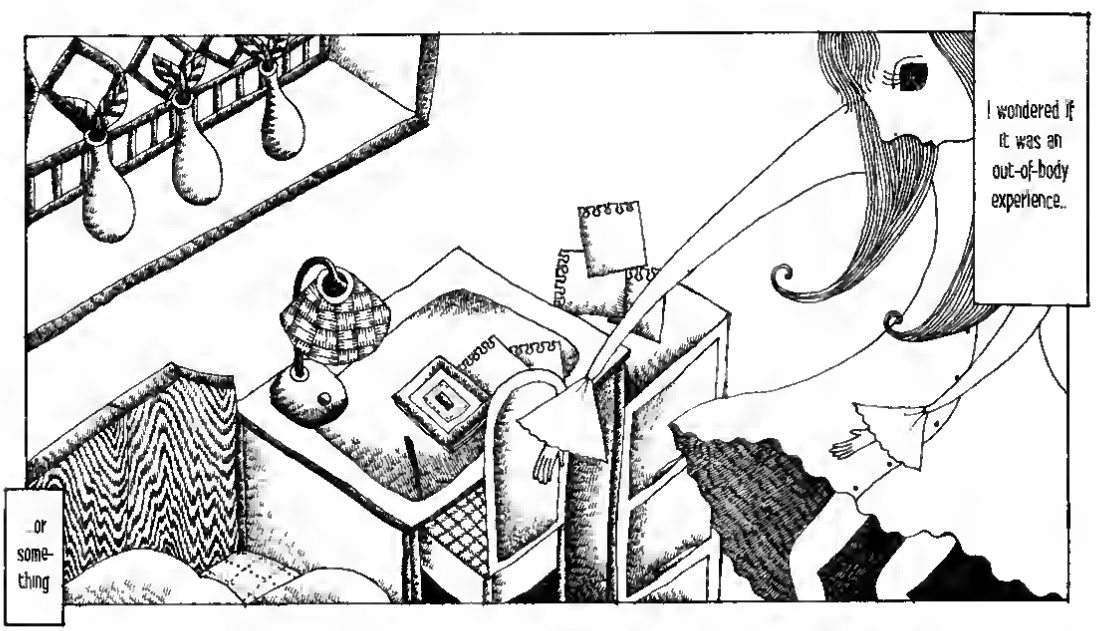


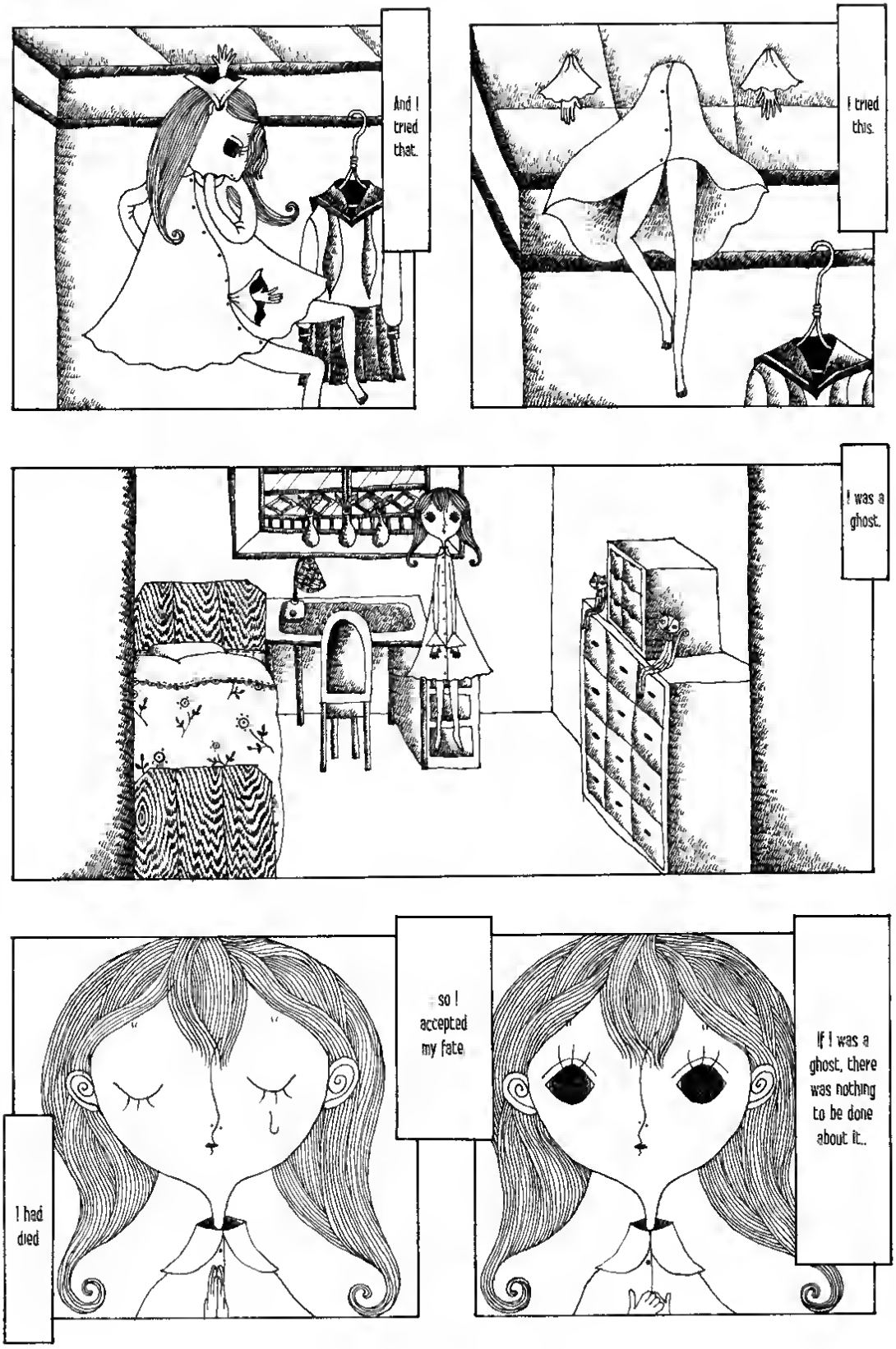


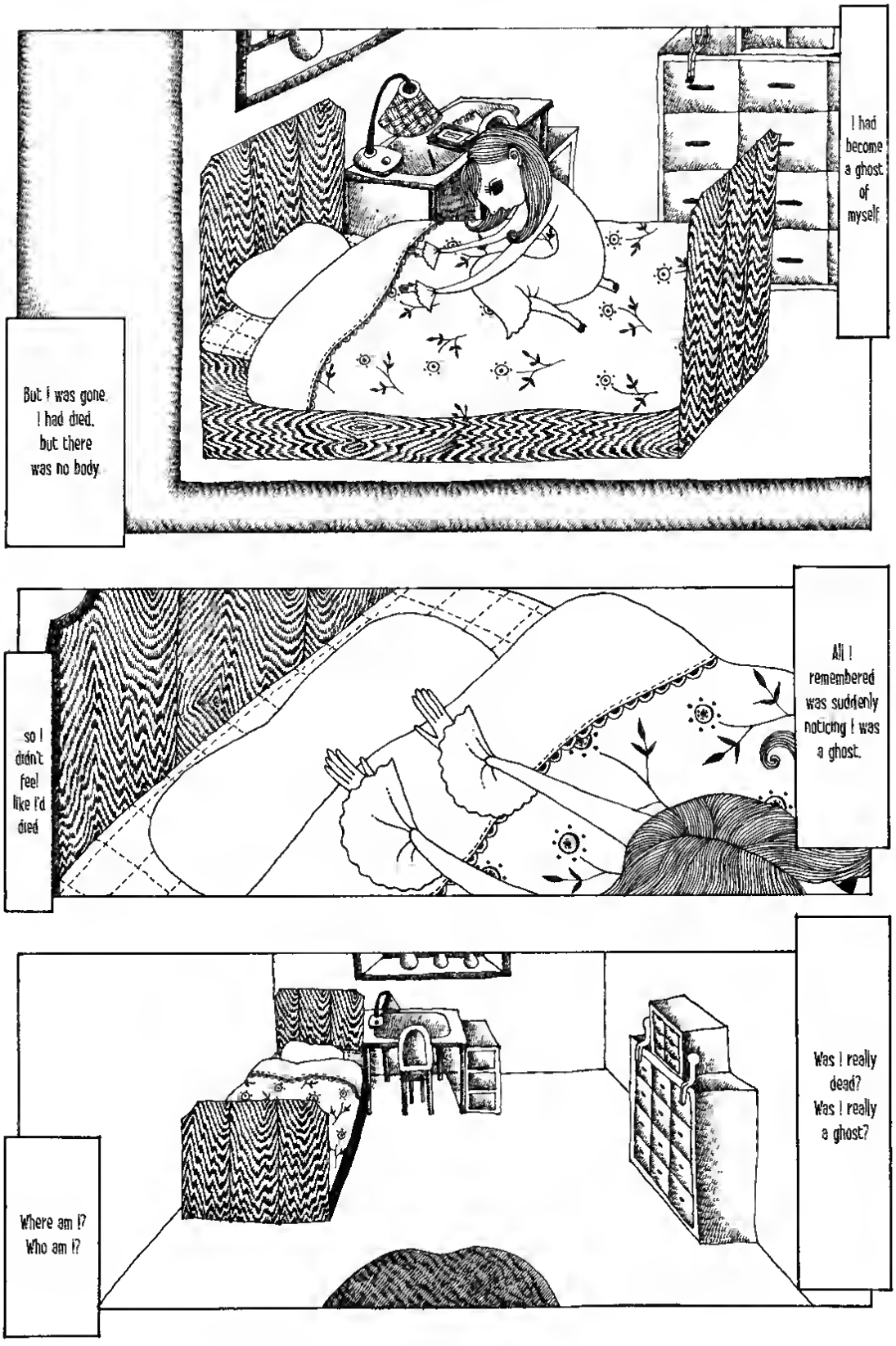
THE END

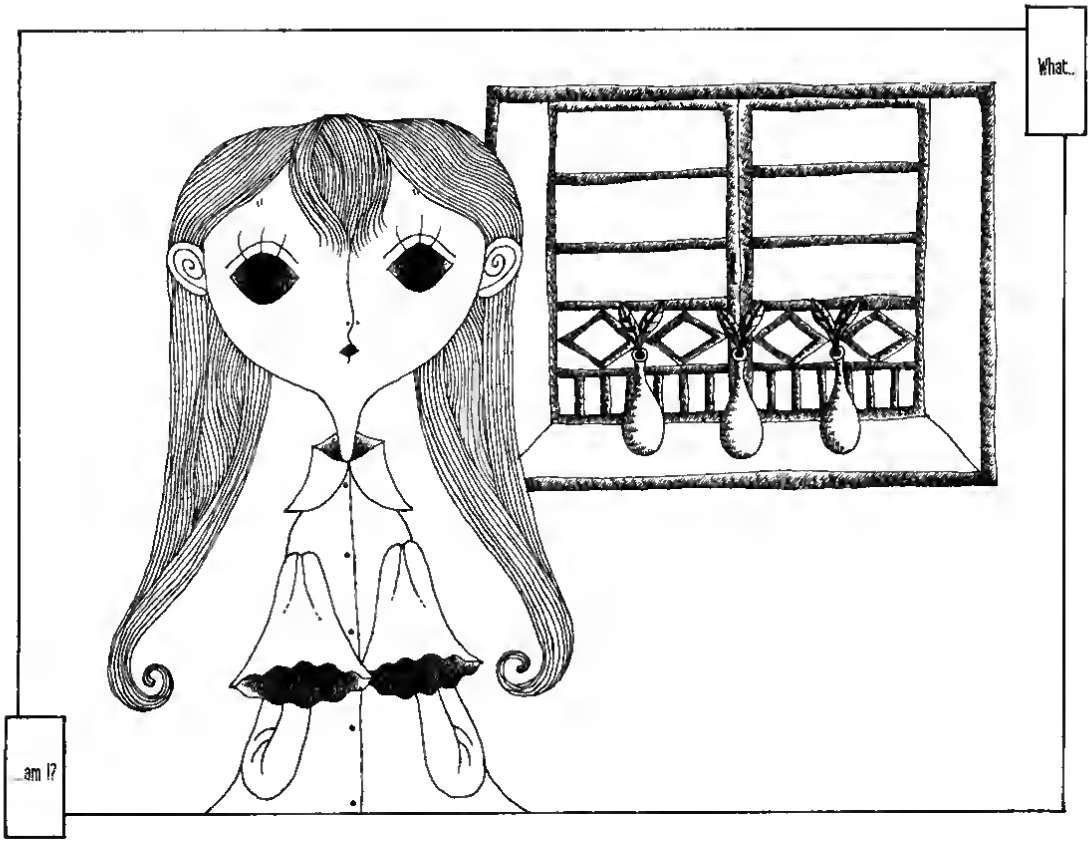
My Ghost

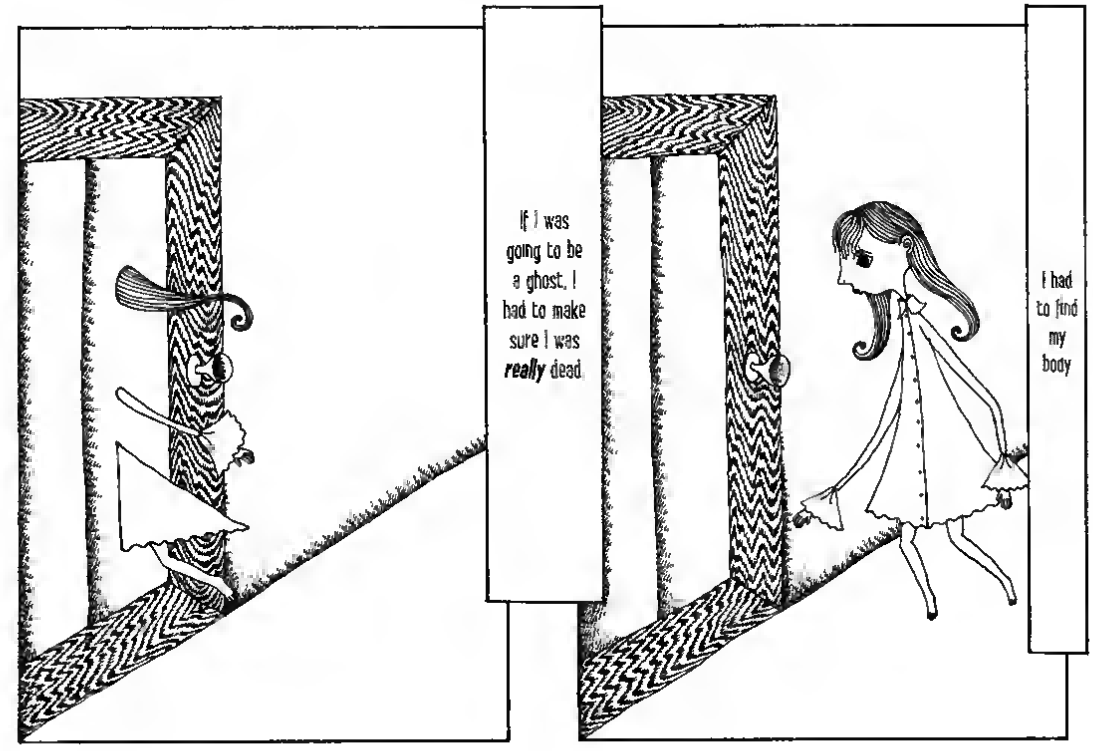

I was a ghost.
Suddenly I was a ghost.

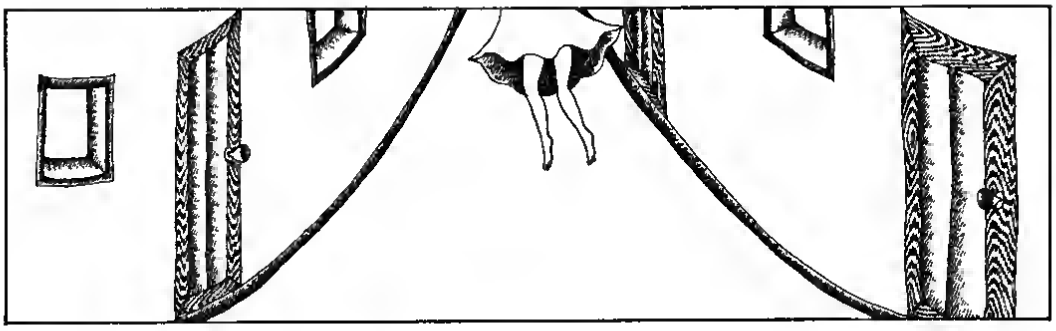

I wondered if it was an out-of-body experience..
...or something

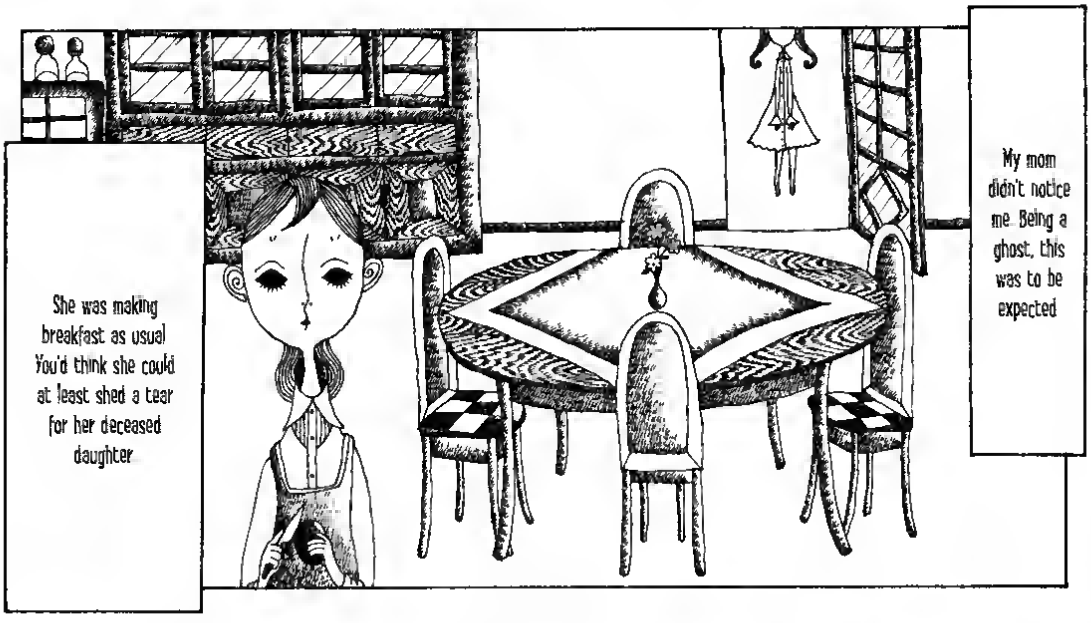

And I tried that.
I tried this.
I was a ghost.
If I was a ghost, there was nothing to be done about it..
so I accepted my fate
I had died

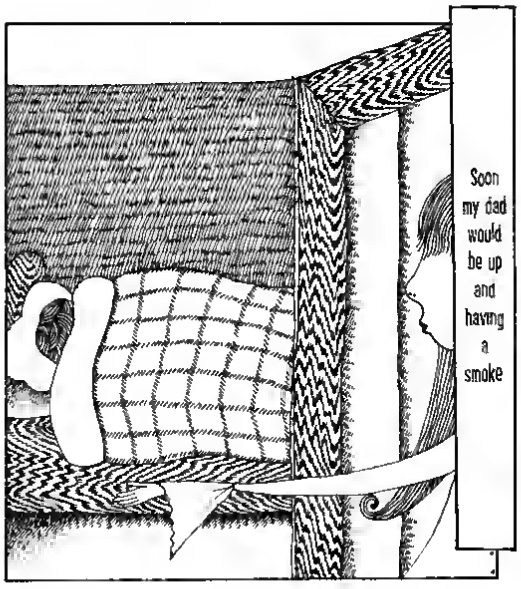

I had become a ghost of myself
But I was gone. I had died, but there was no body
All I remembered was suddenly noticing I was a ghost.
so I didn't feel like I'd died
Was I really dead? Was I really a ghost?
Where am I? Who am I?

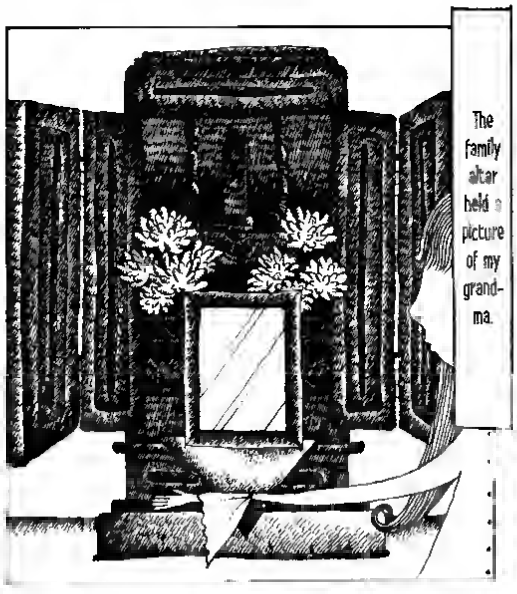

What...
...am I?

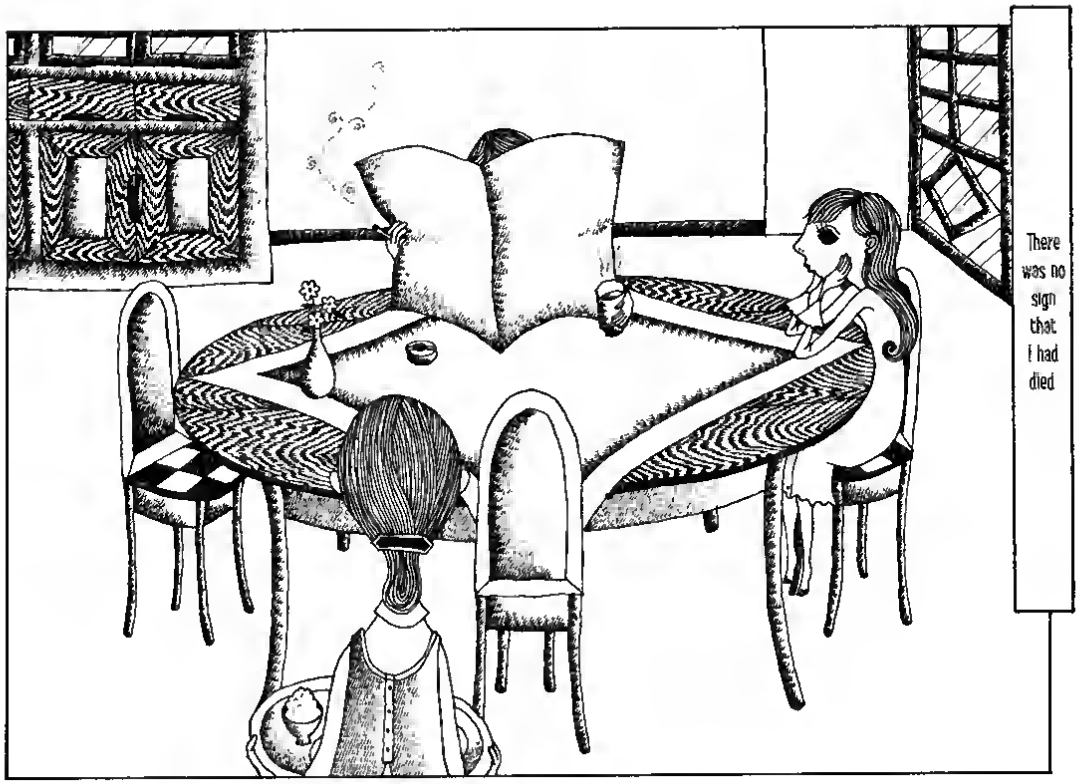

If I was going to be a ghost, I had to make sure I was *really* dead.
I had to find my body

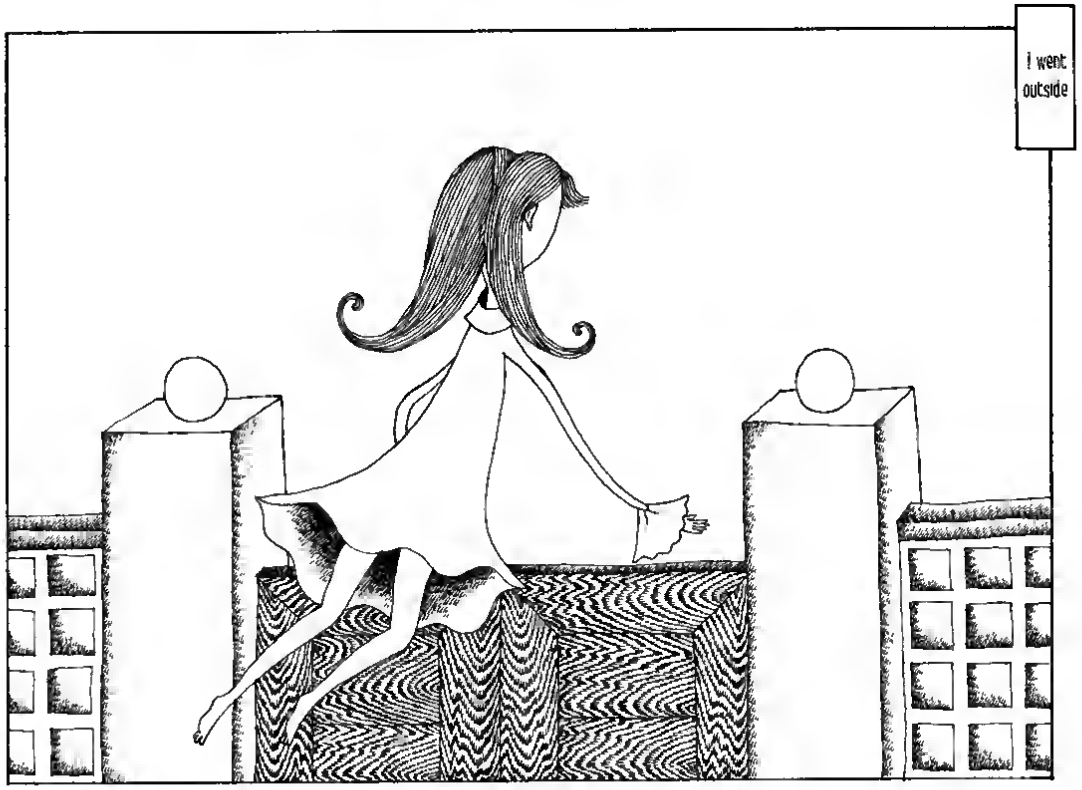


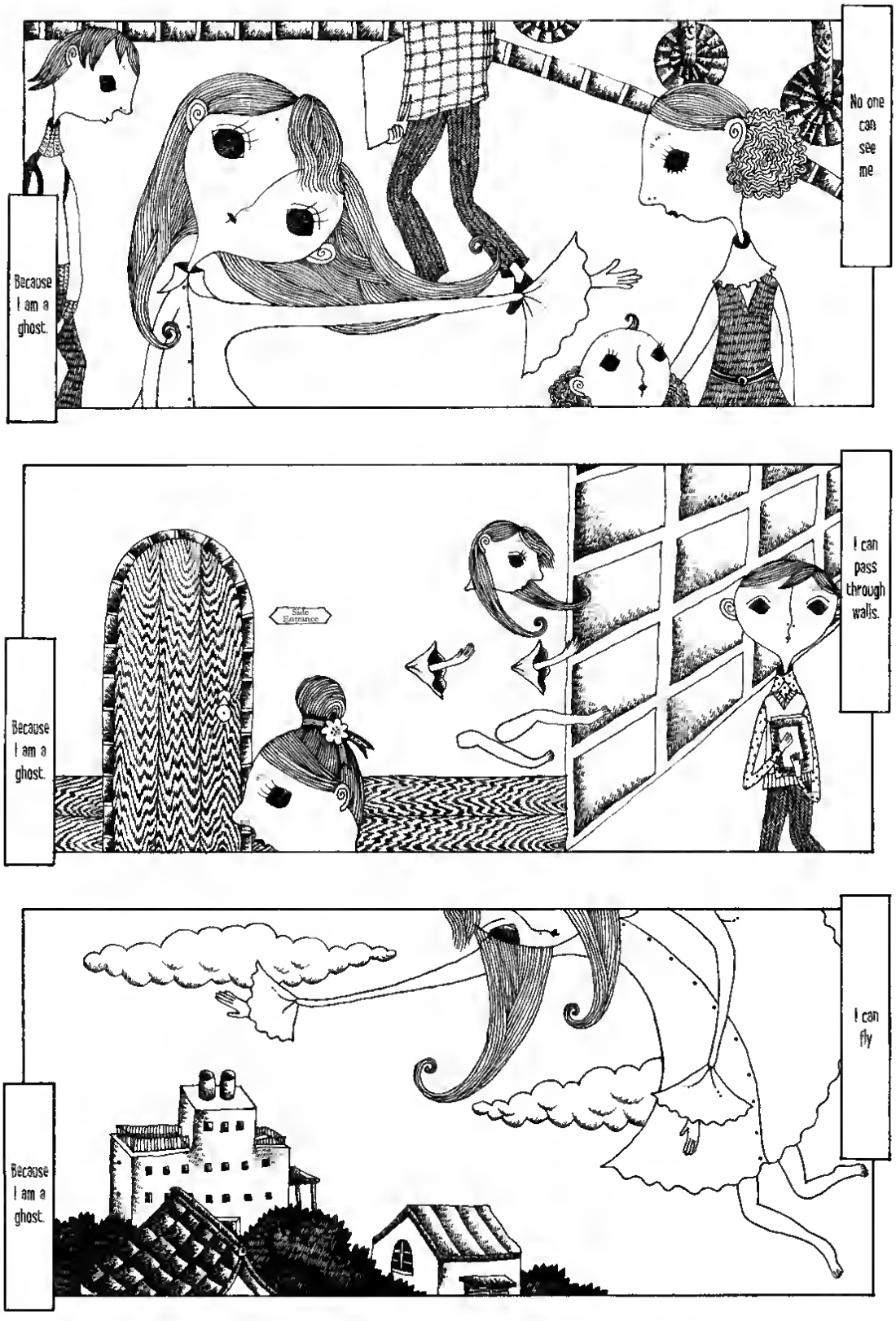

She was making breakfast as usual You'd think she could at least shed a tear for her deceased daughter
My mom didn't notice me. Being a ghost, this was to be expected

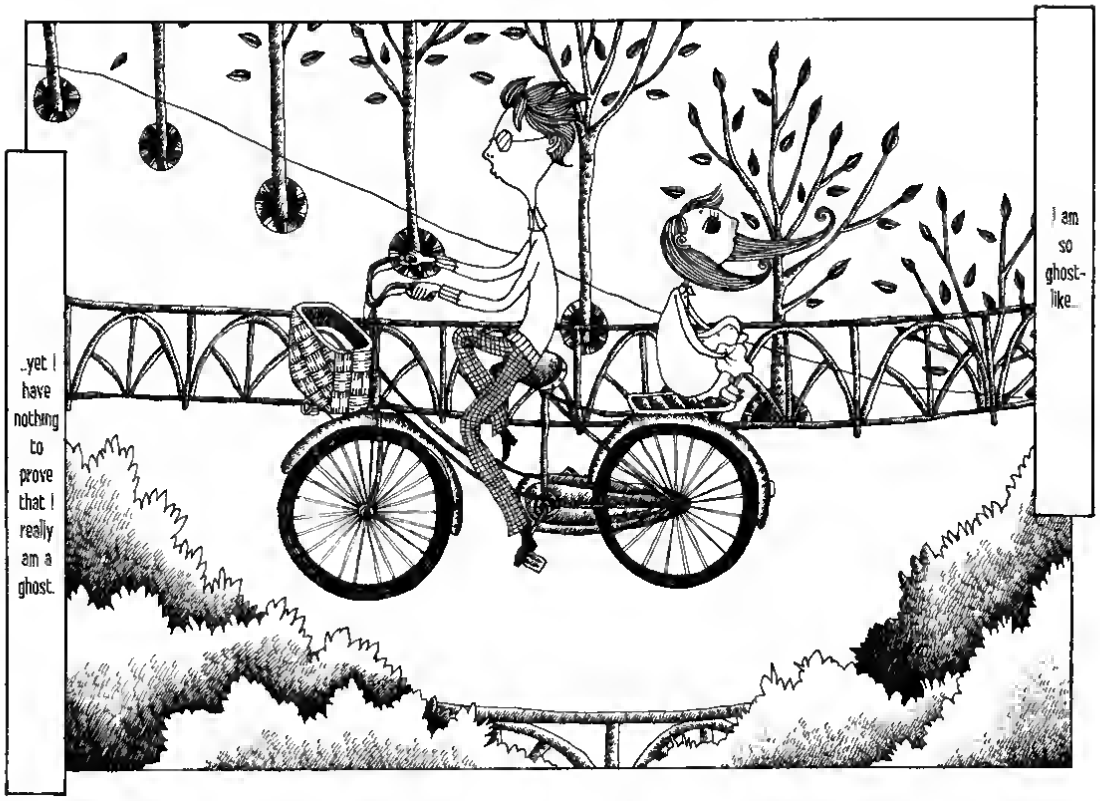

Soon my dad would be up and having a smoke

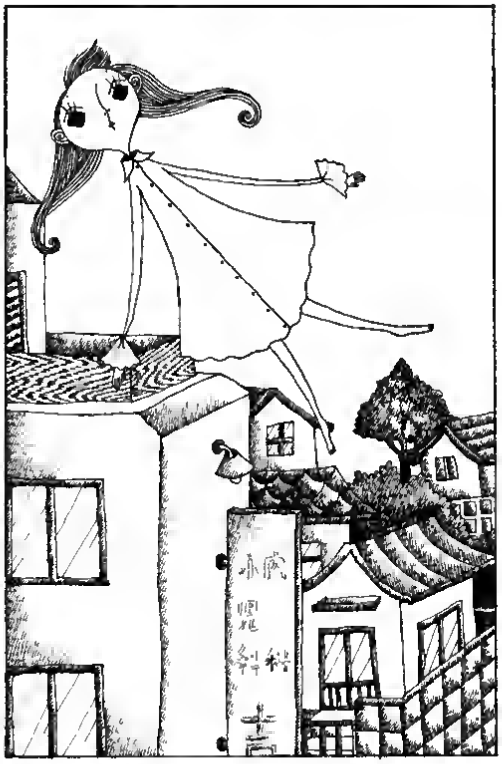

The family altar held a picture of my grandma.

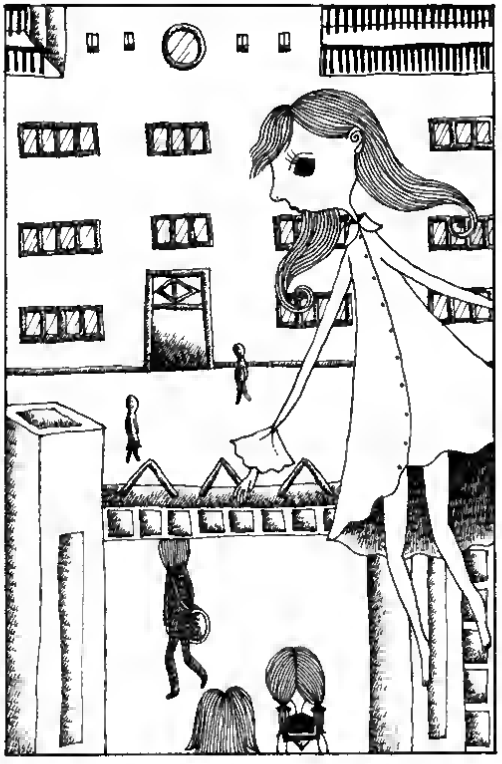

There was no sign that I had died

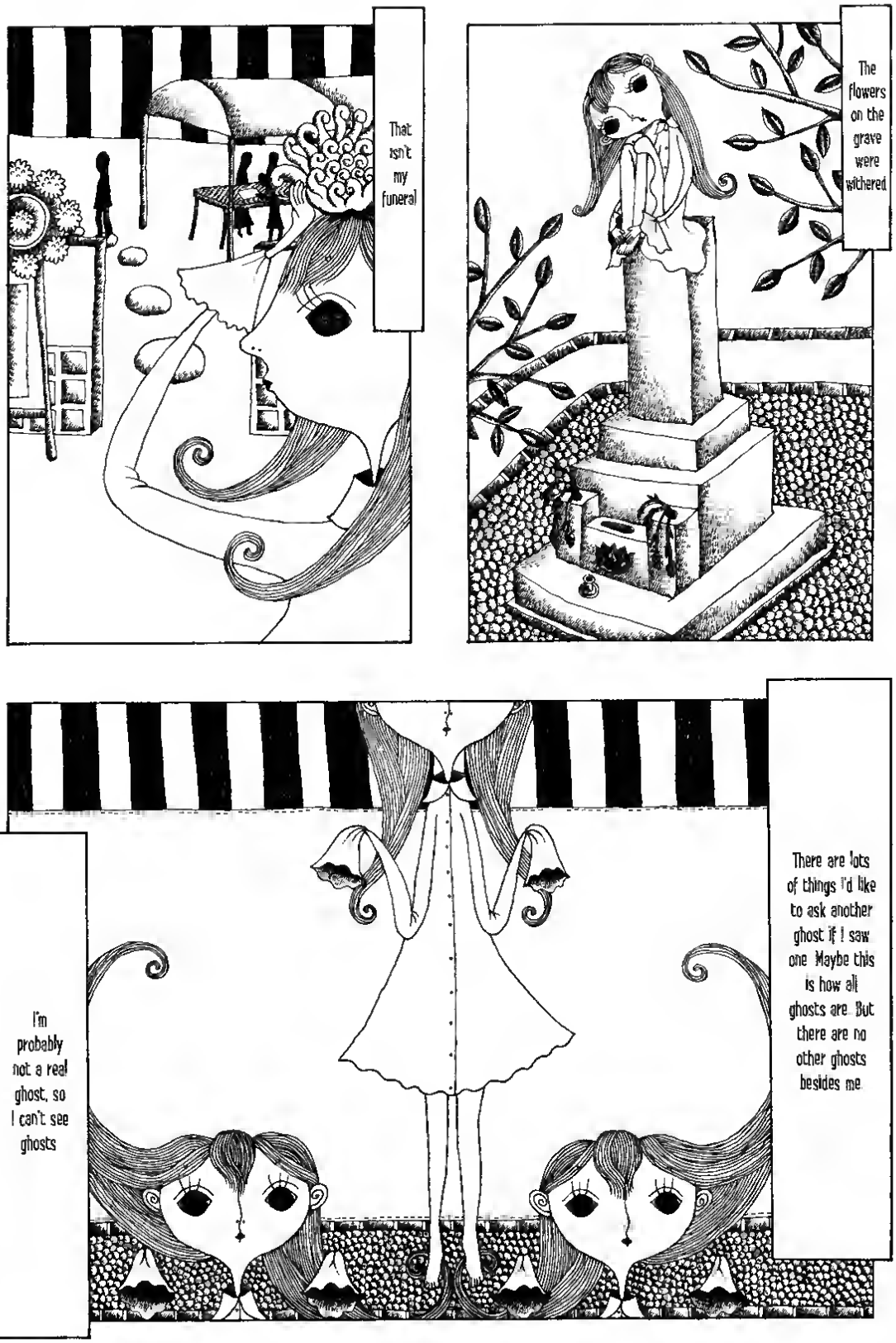

I went outside

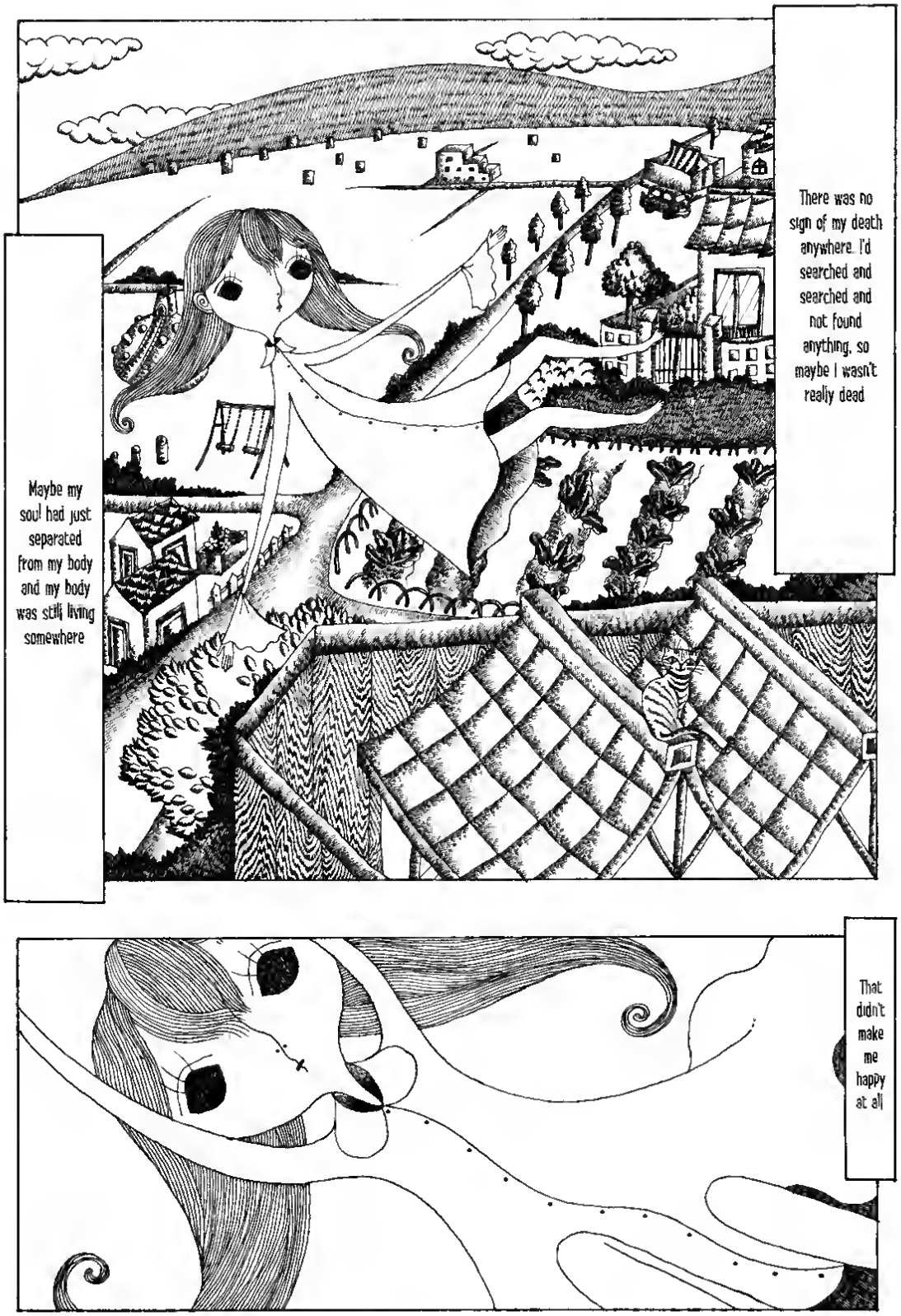

No one can see me.
Because I am a ghost.
Side Entrance
I can pass through walls.
Because I am a ghost.
I can fly
Because I am a ghost.

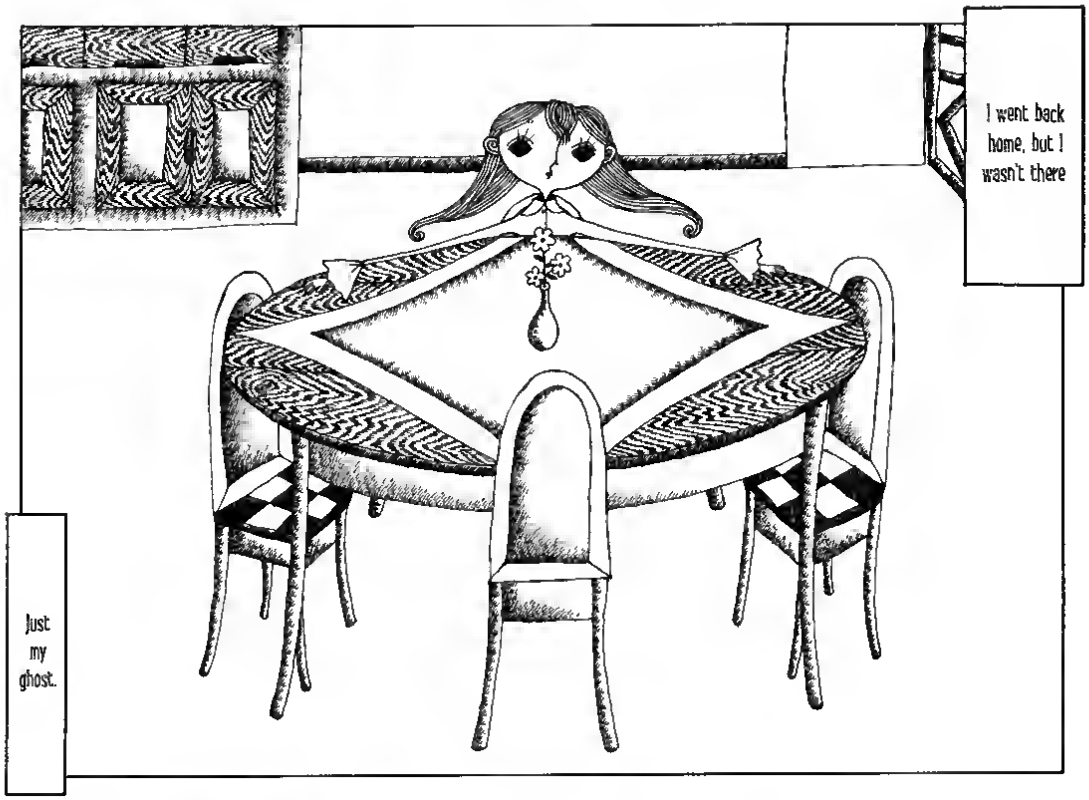

..yet I have nothing to prove that I really am a ghost.
I am so ghost-like...

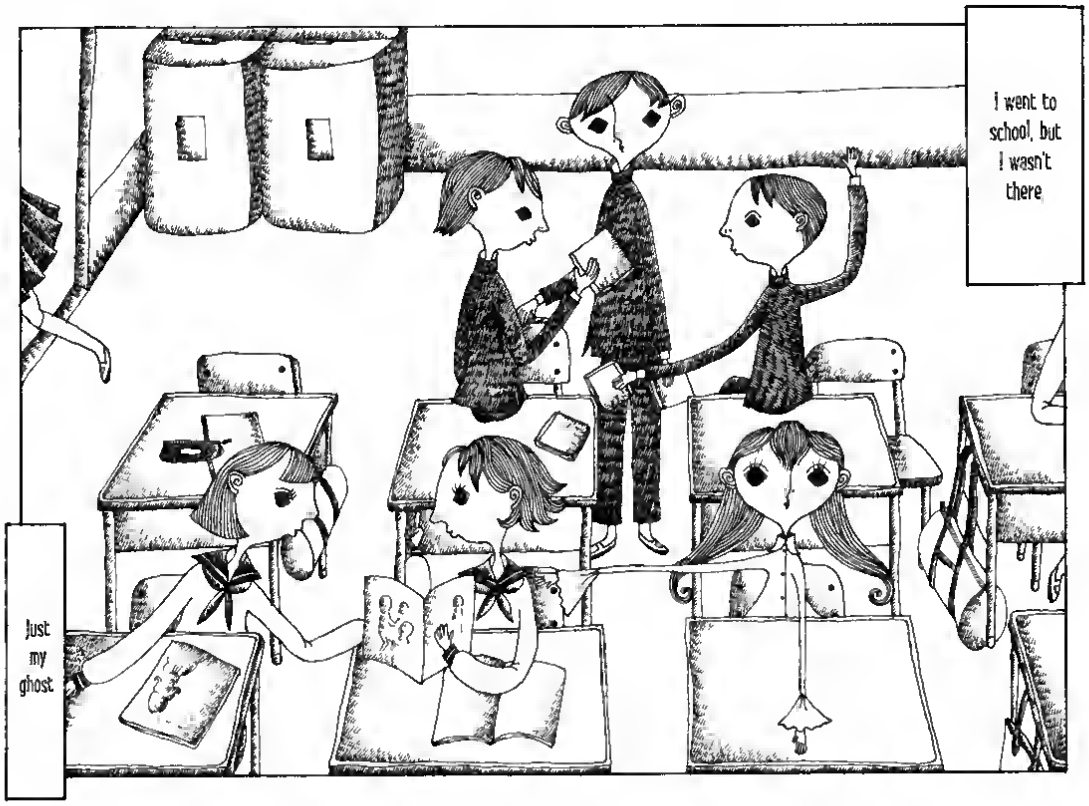




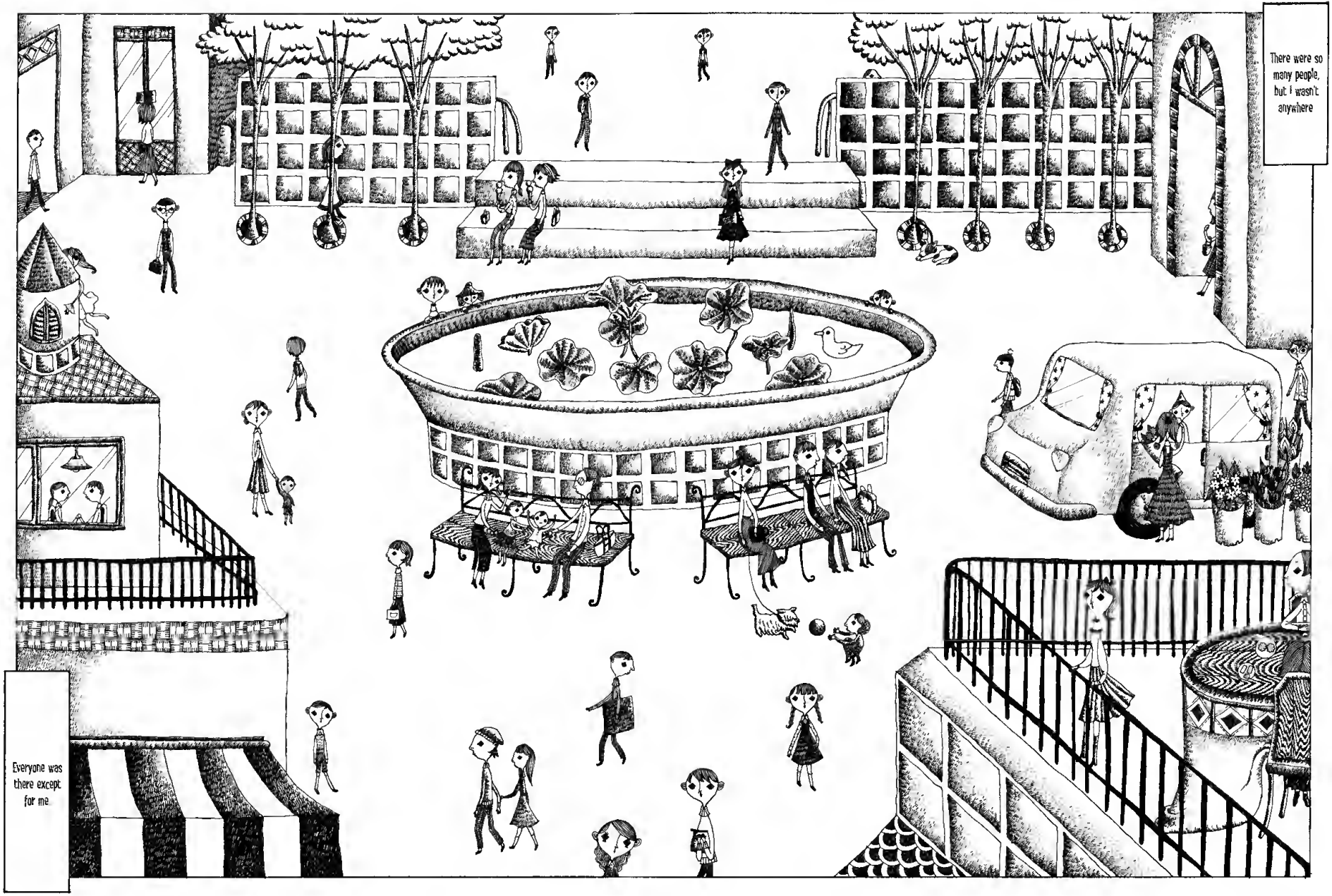

That isn't my funeral
The flowers on the grave were withered
I'm probably not a real ghost, so I can't see ghosts
There are lots of things I'd like to ask another ghost if I saw one. Maybe this is how all ghosts are. But there are no other ghosts besides me.

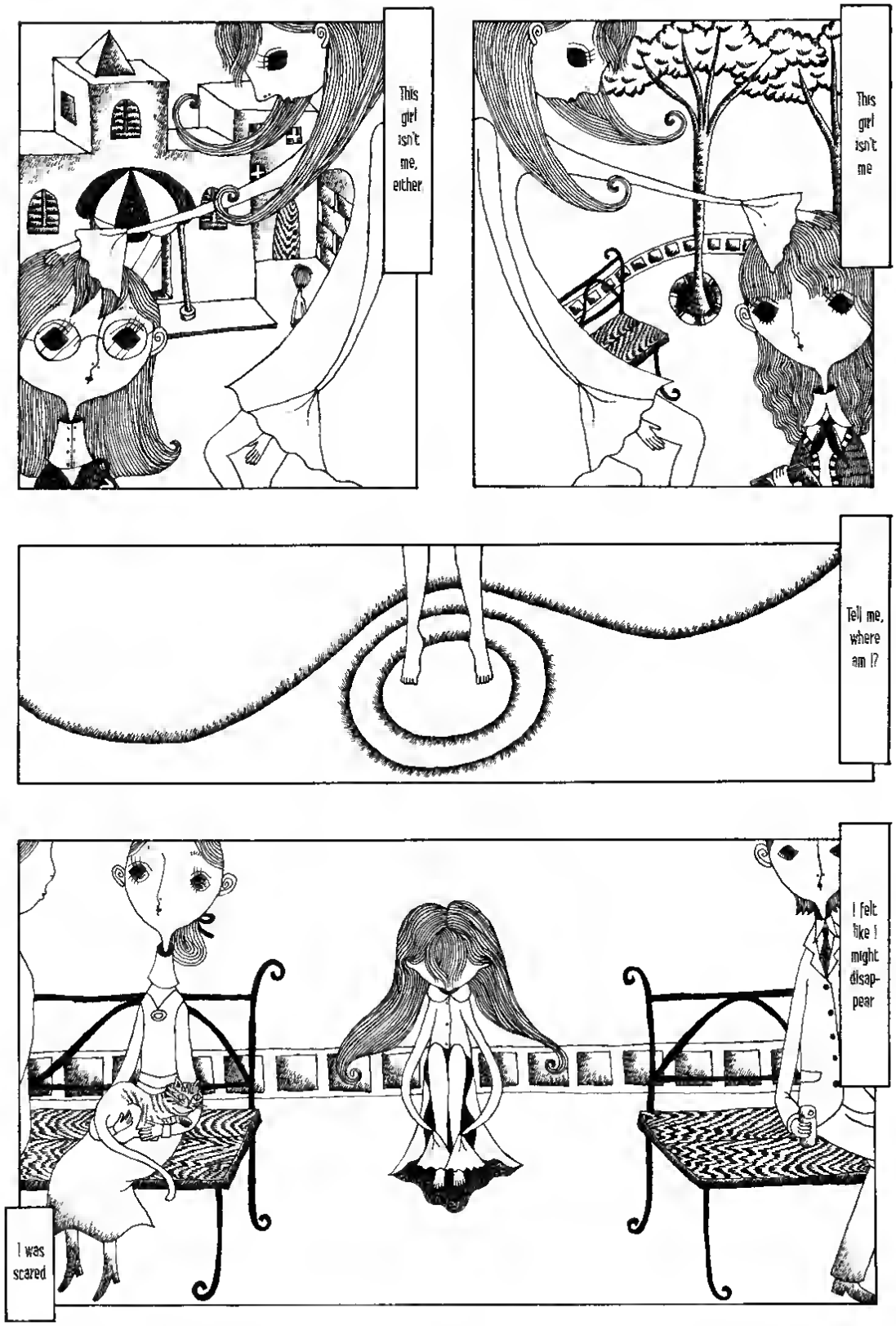

Maybe my soul had just separated from my body and my body was still living somewhere
There was no sign of my death anywhere. I'd searched and searched and not found anything, so maybe I wasn't really dead
That didn't make me happy at all

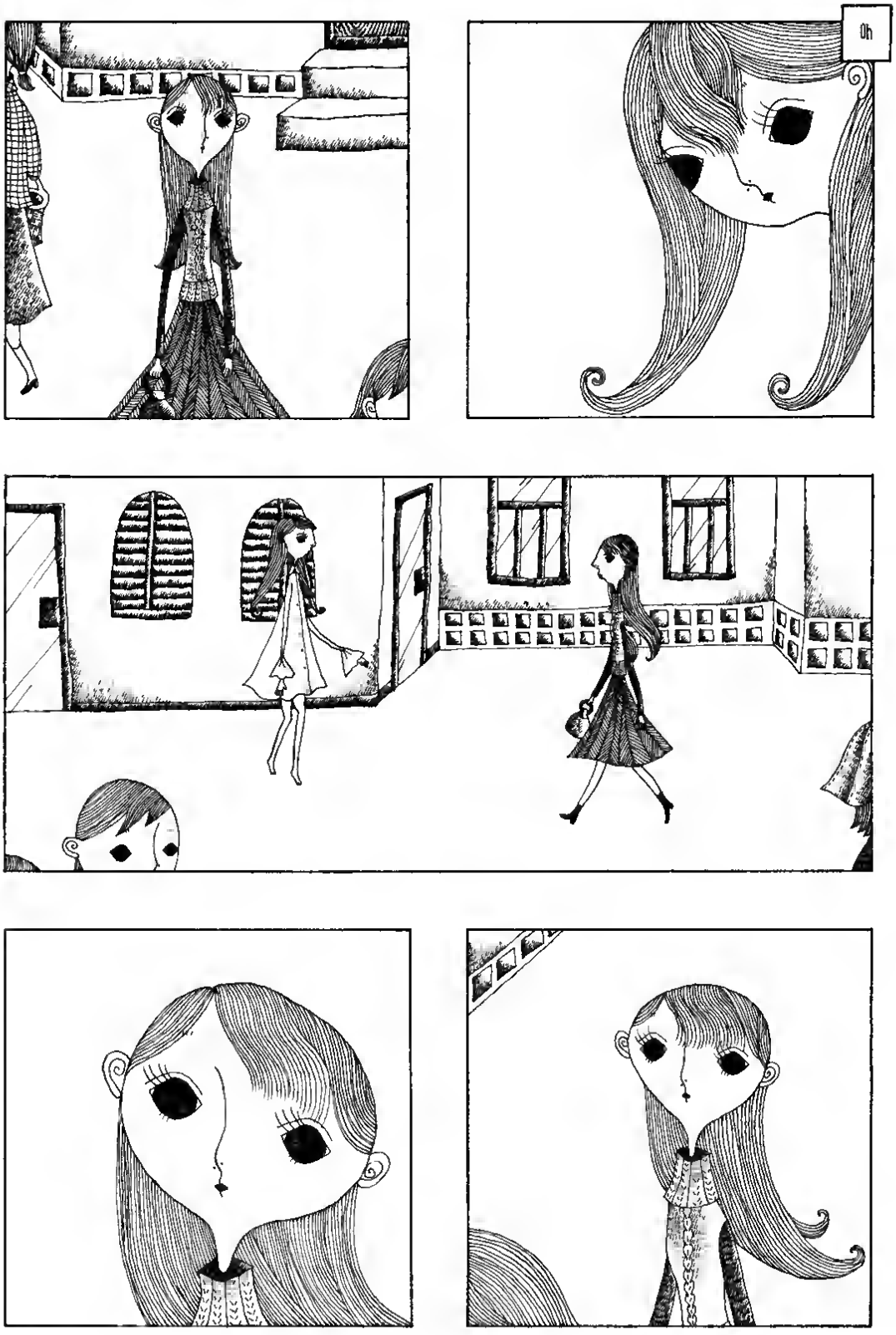

I went back home, but I wasn't there
Just my ghost.

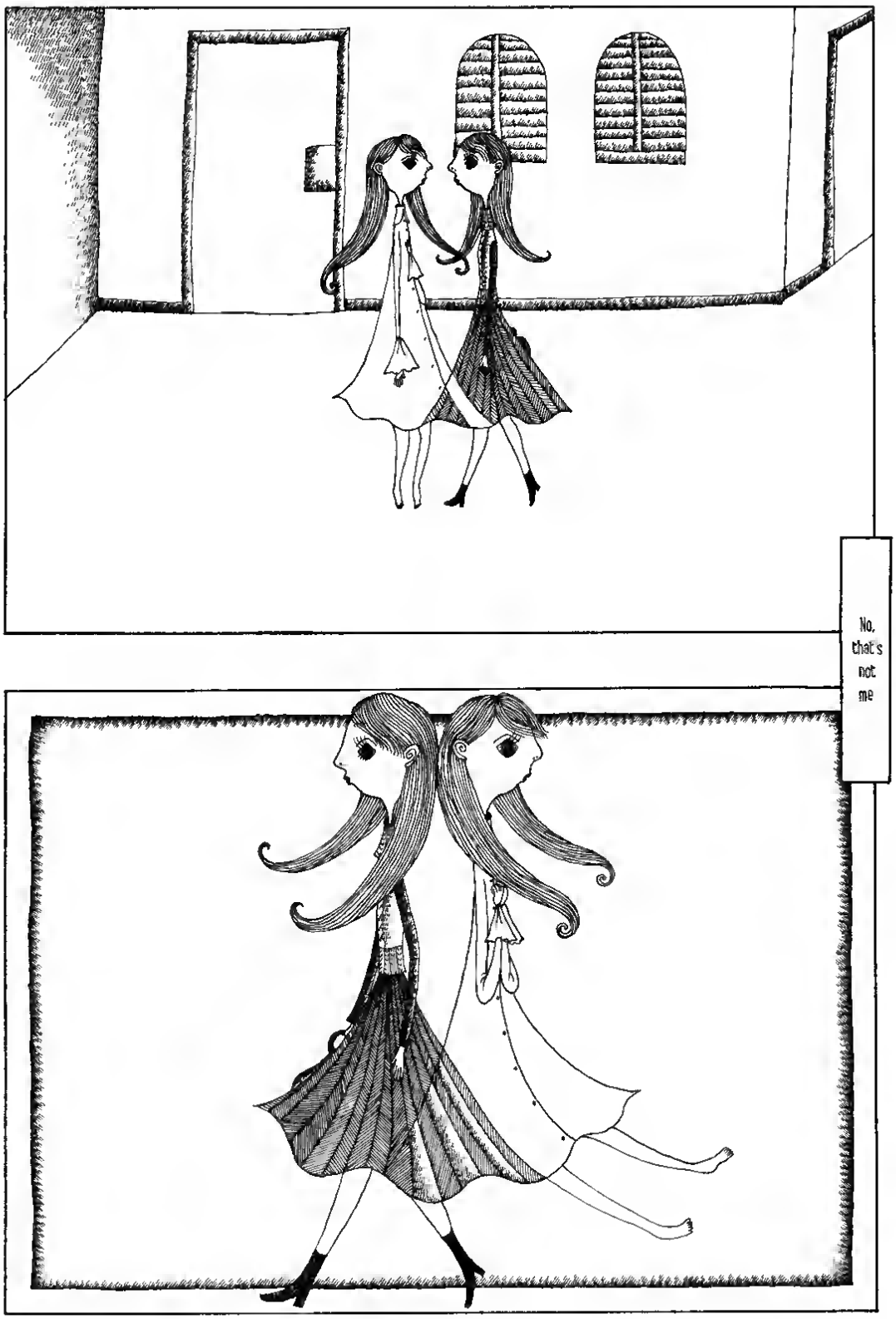

I went to school, but I wasn't there
Just my ghost

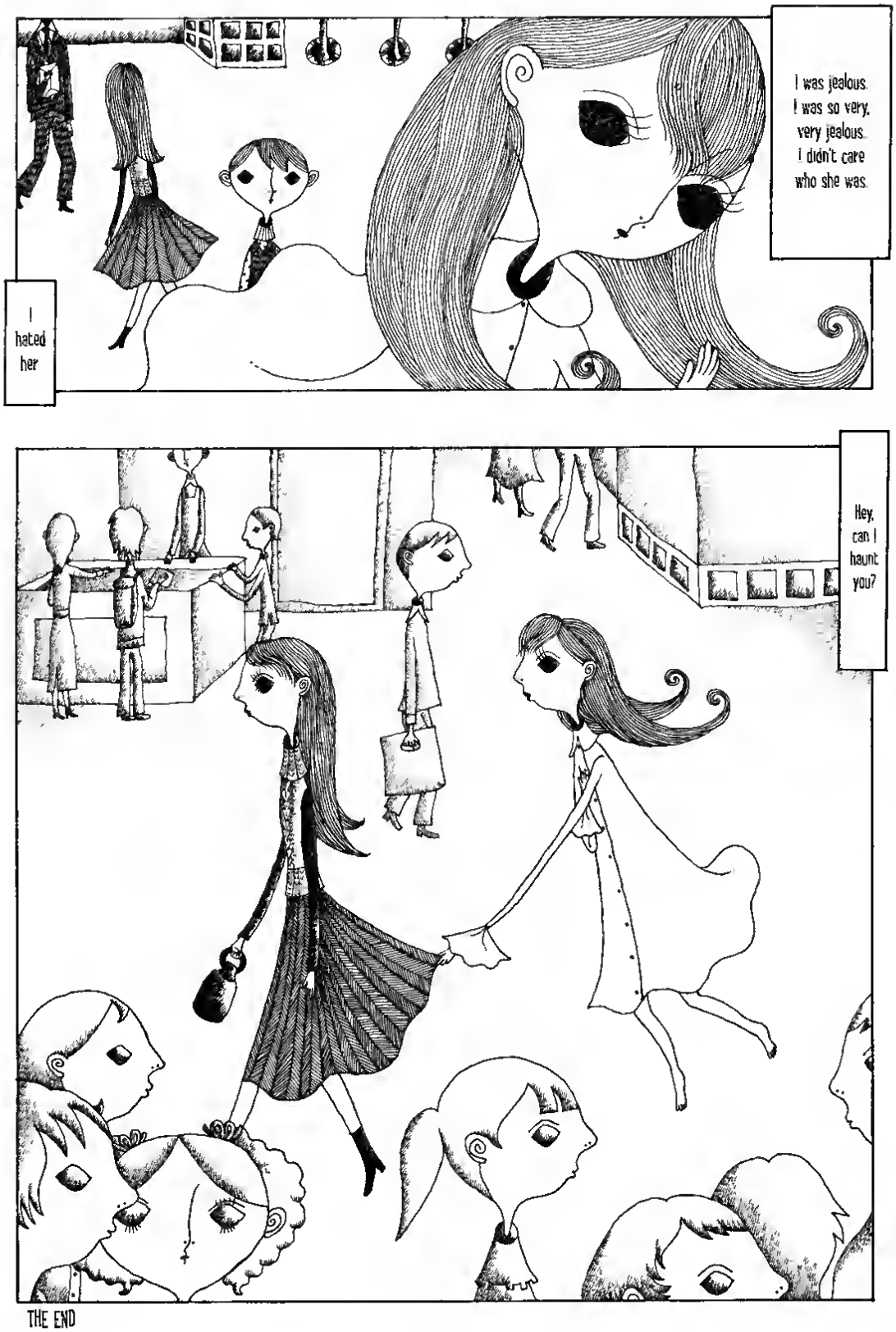
I went into town There were so many people


There were so many people, but I wasn't anywhere
Everyone was there except for me.


This girl isn't me, either.
This girl isn't me
Tell me, where am I?
I felt like I might disap-pear
I was scared


Oh

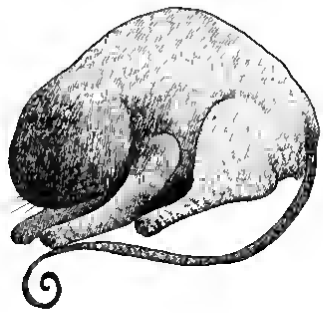

No,
that's
not
me


I hated her
I was jealous. I was so very, very jealous. I didn't care who she was.
Hey, can I haunt you?
THE END

A Creature With Eyes

A Creature With Eyes

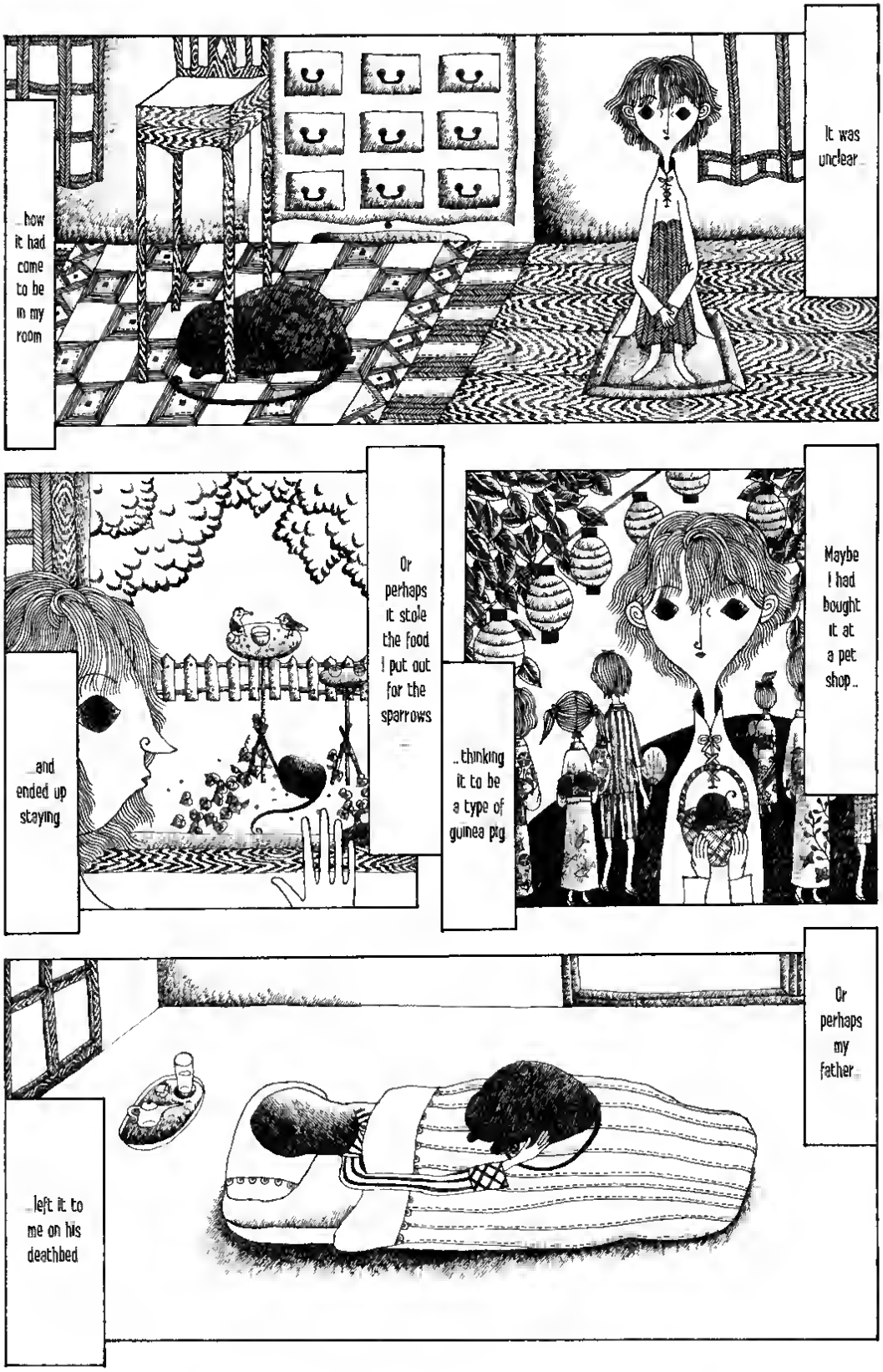
The animal looked like a giant rabbit.

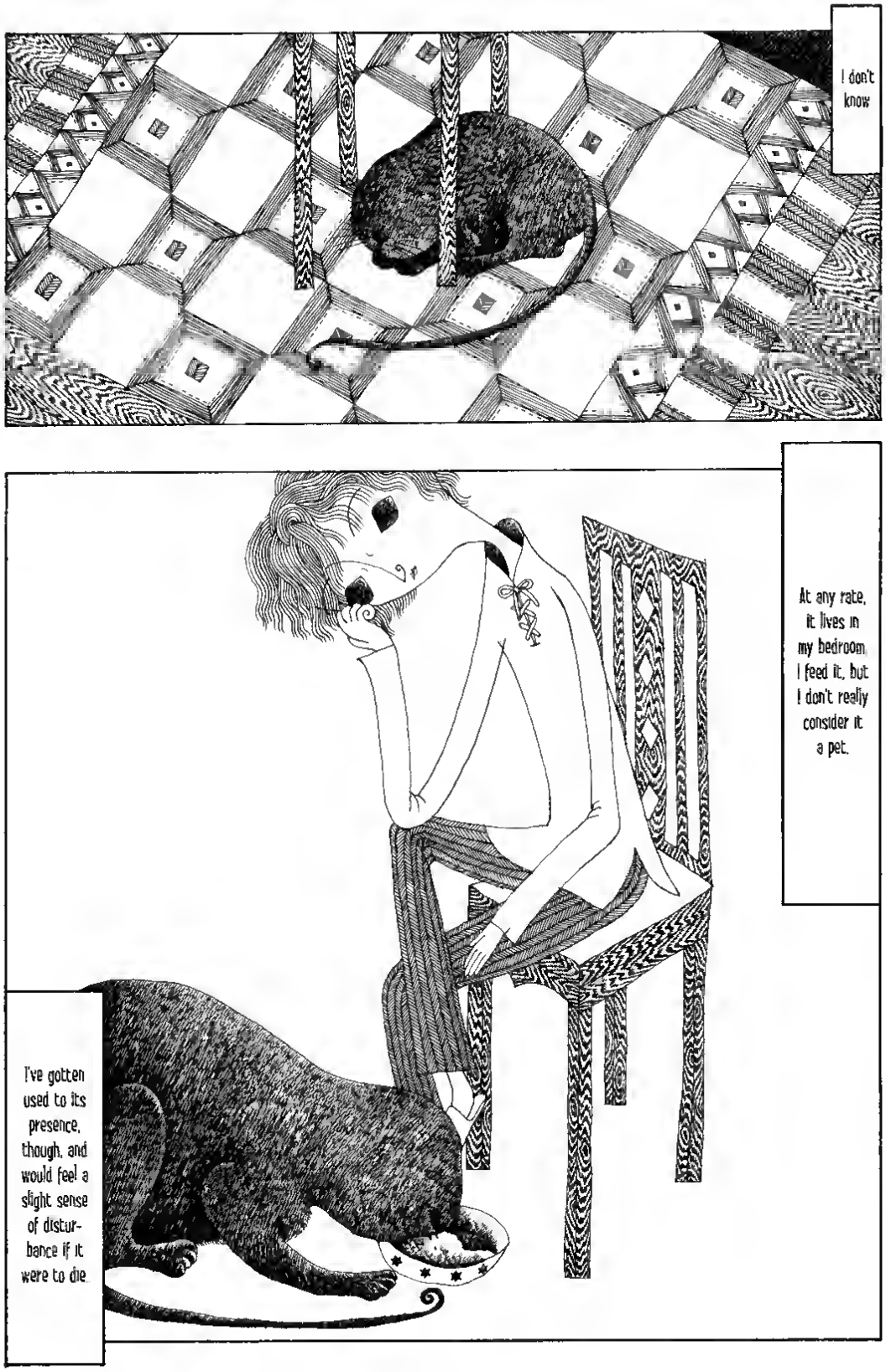


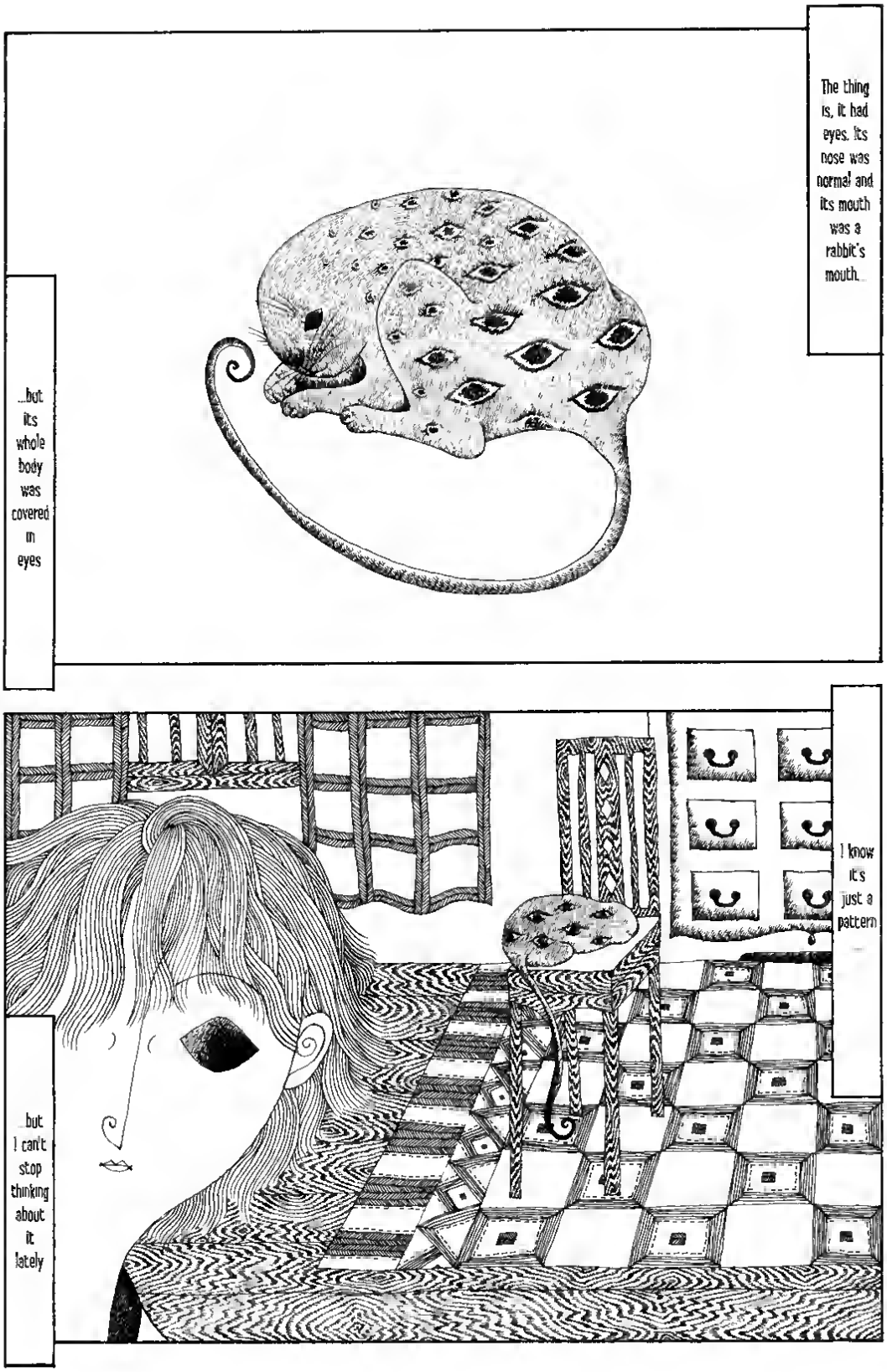
It didn't have ears like a rabbit, though. They must have been hidden in its fur somewhere, but they must have been highly devolved, for it acted as if it were deaf

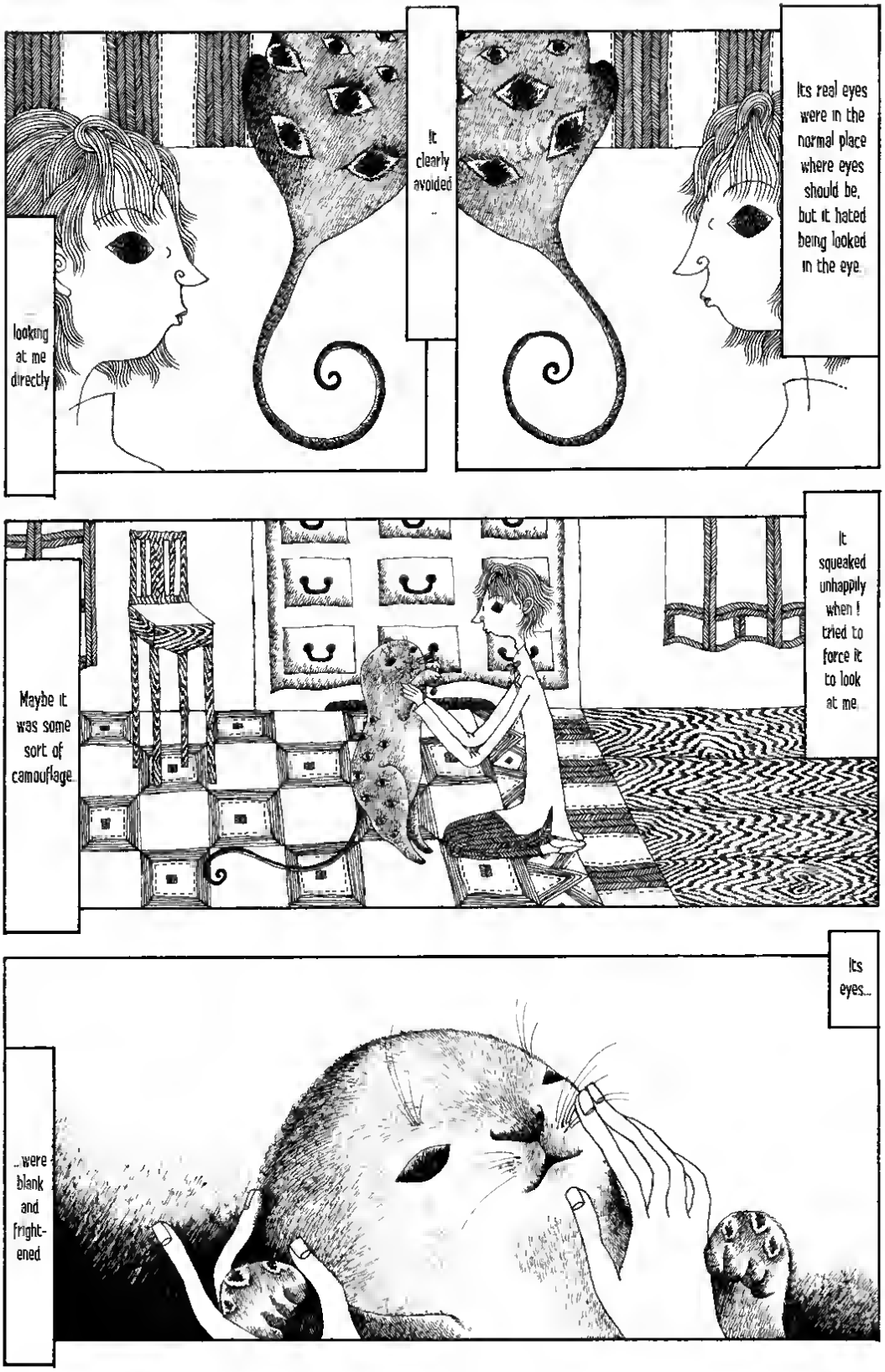
Its nose was normal its mouth was like a rabbit's

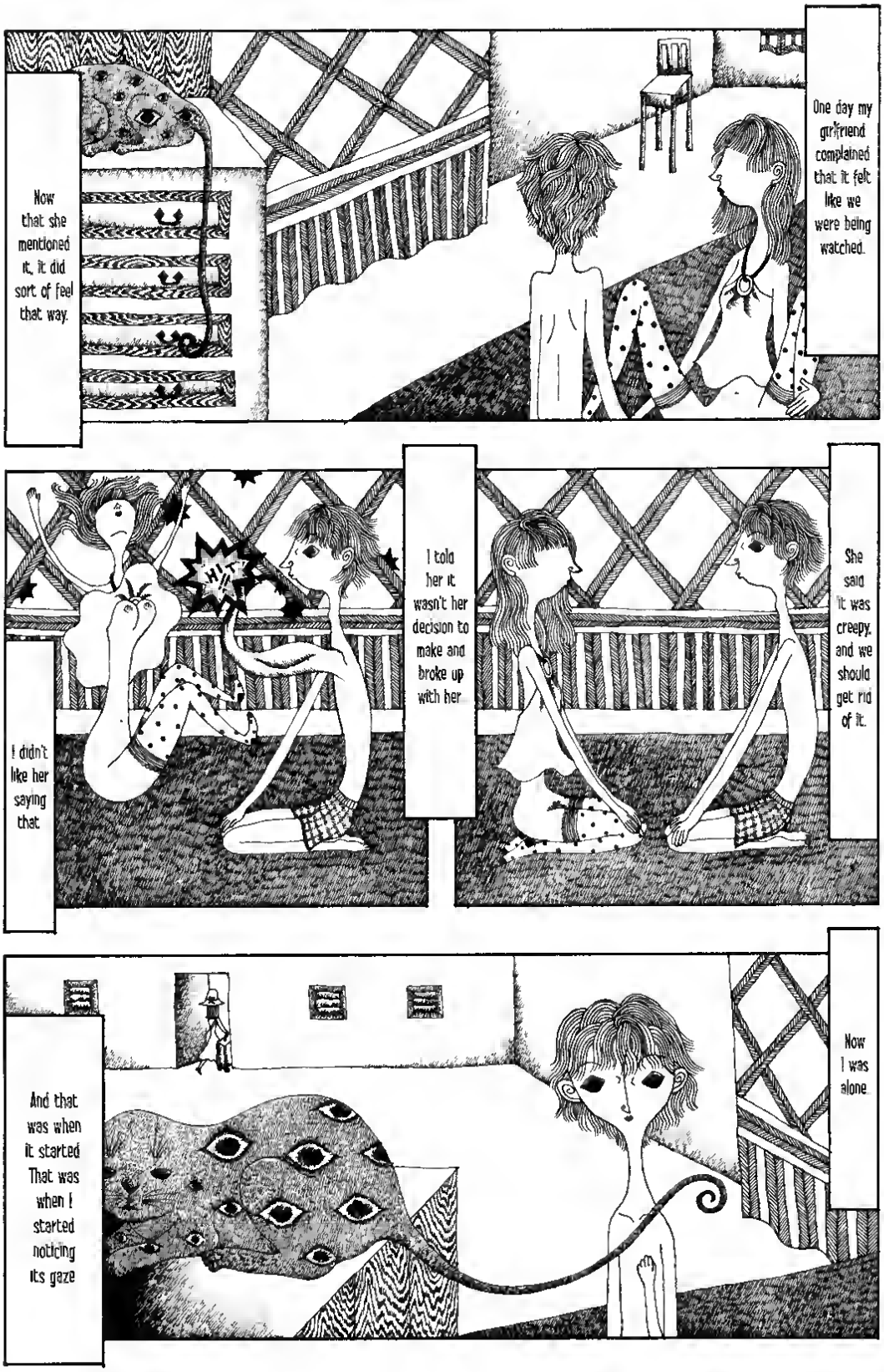
Its tail was long

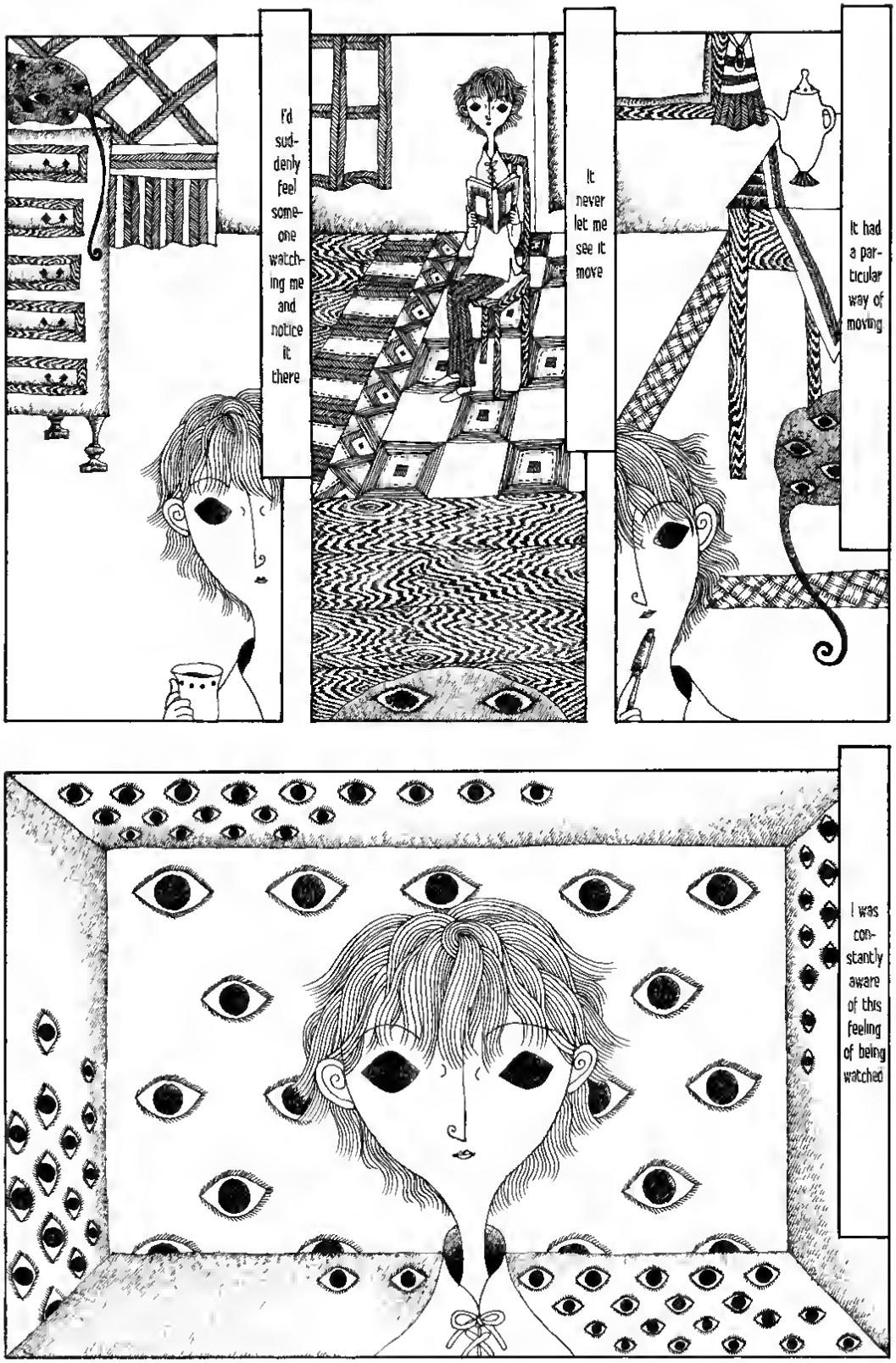

It was unclear...
...how it had come to be in my room
Maybe I had bought it at a pet shop...
...thinking it to be a type of guinea pig
Or perhaps it stole the food I put out for the sparrows
...and ended up staying
Or perhaps my father...
...left it to me on his deathbed

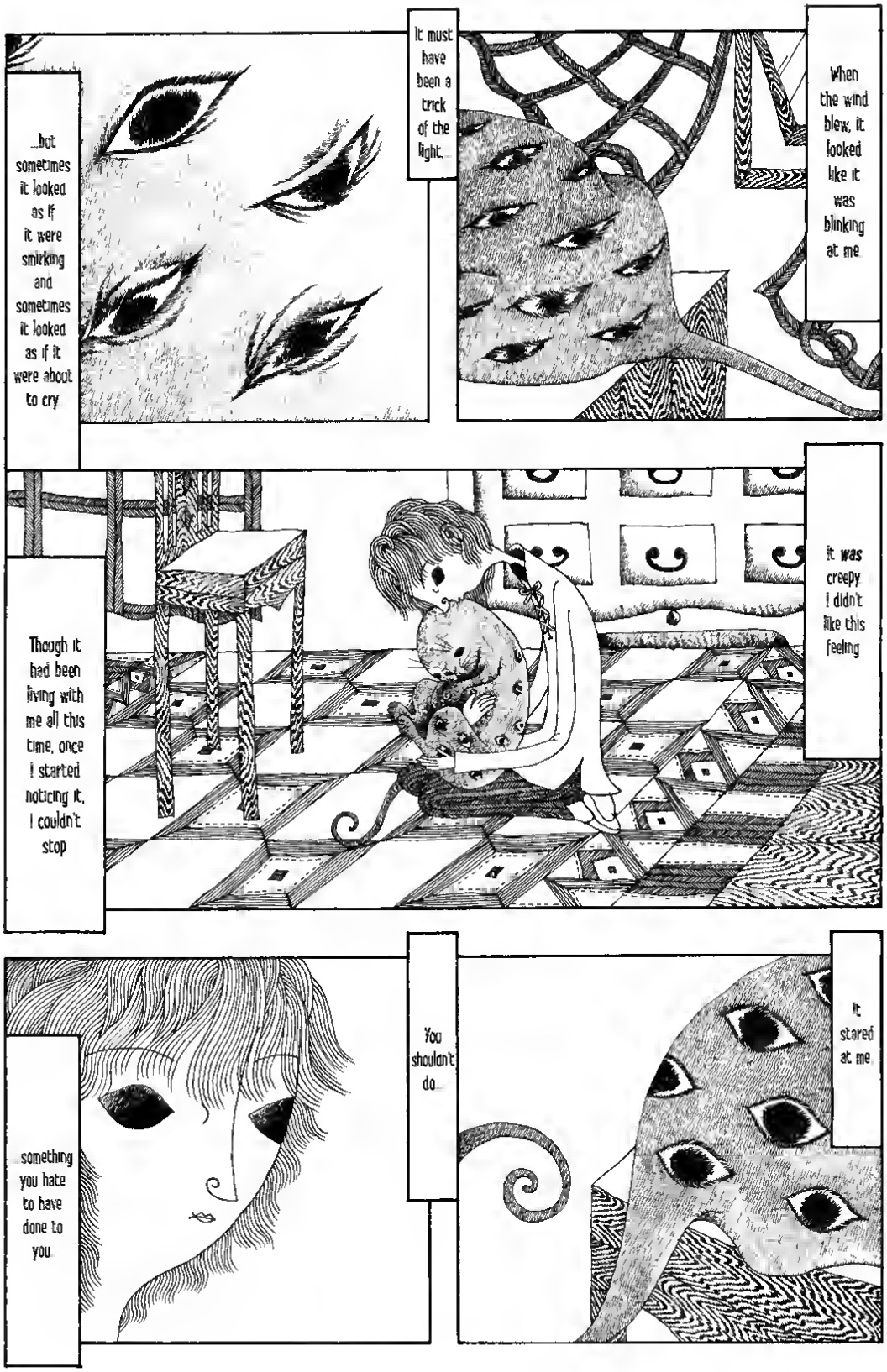

I don't know
At any rate, it lives in my bedroom. I feed it, but I don't really consider it a pet.
I've gotten used to its presence, though, and would feel a slight sense of disturbance if it were to die.

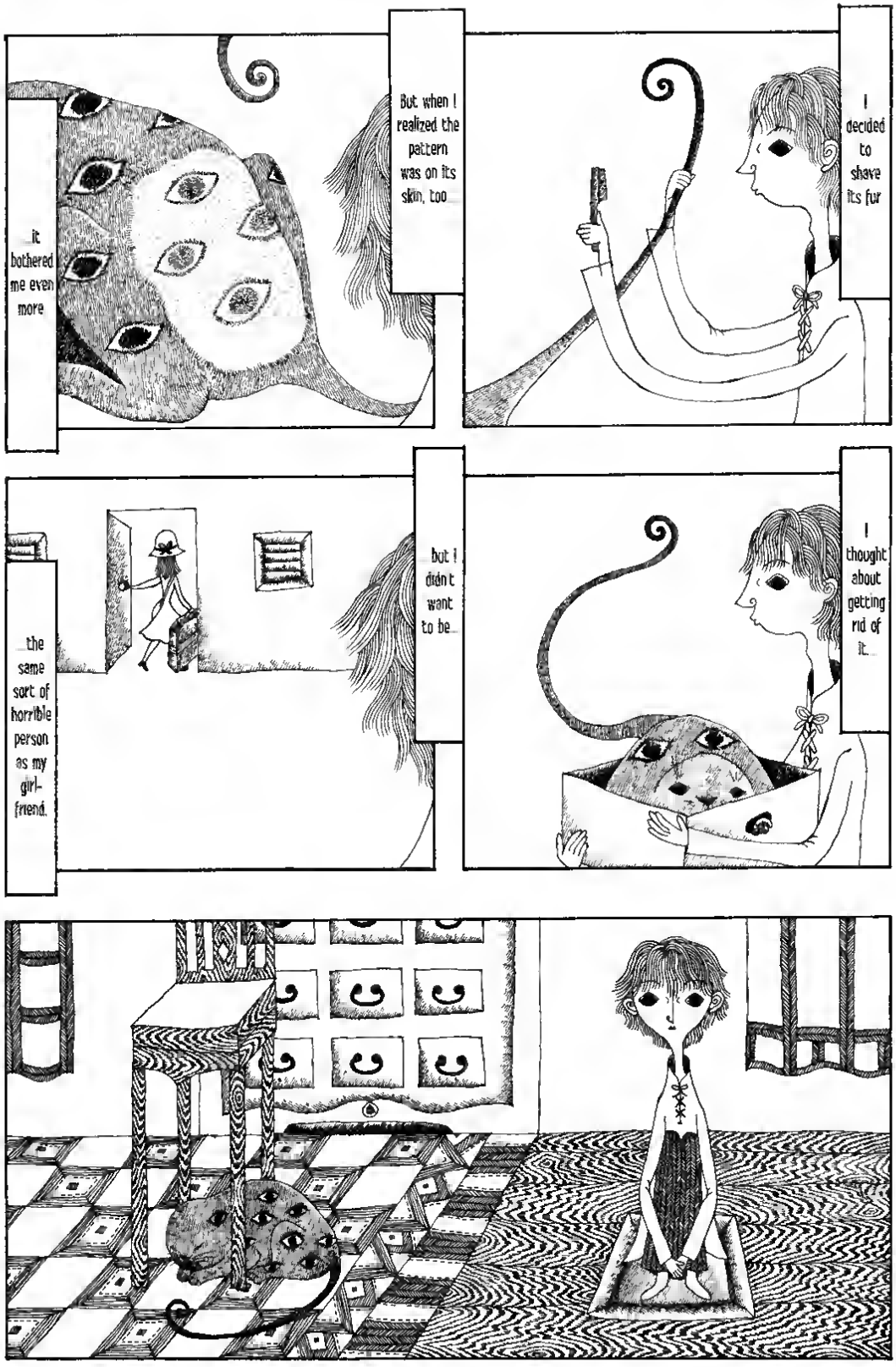

The thing is, it had eyes. Its nose was normal and its mouth was a rabbit's mouth...
...but its whole body was covered in eyes
I know it's just a pattern...
...but I can't stop thinking about it lately

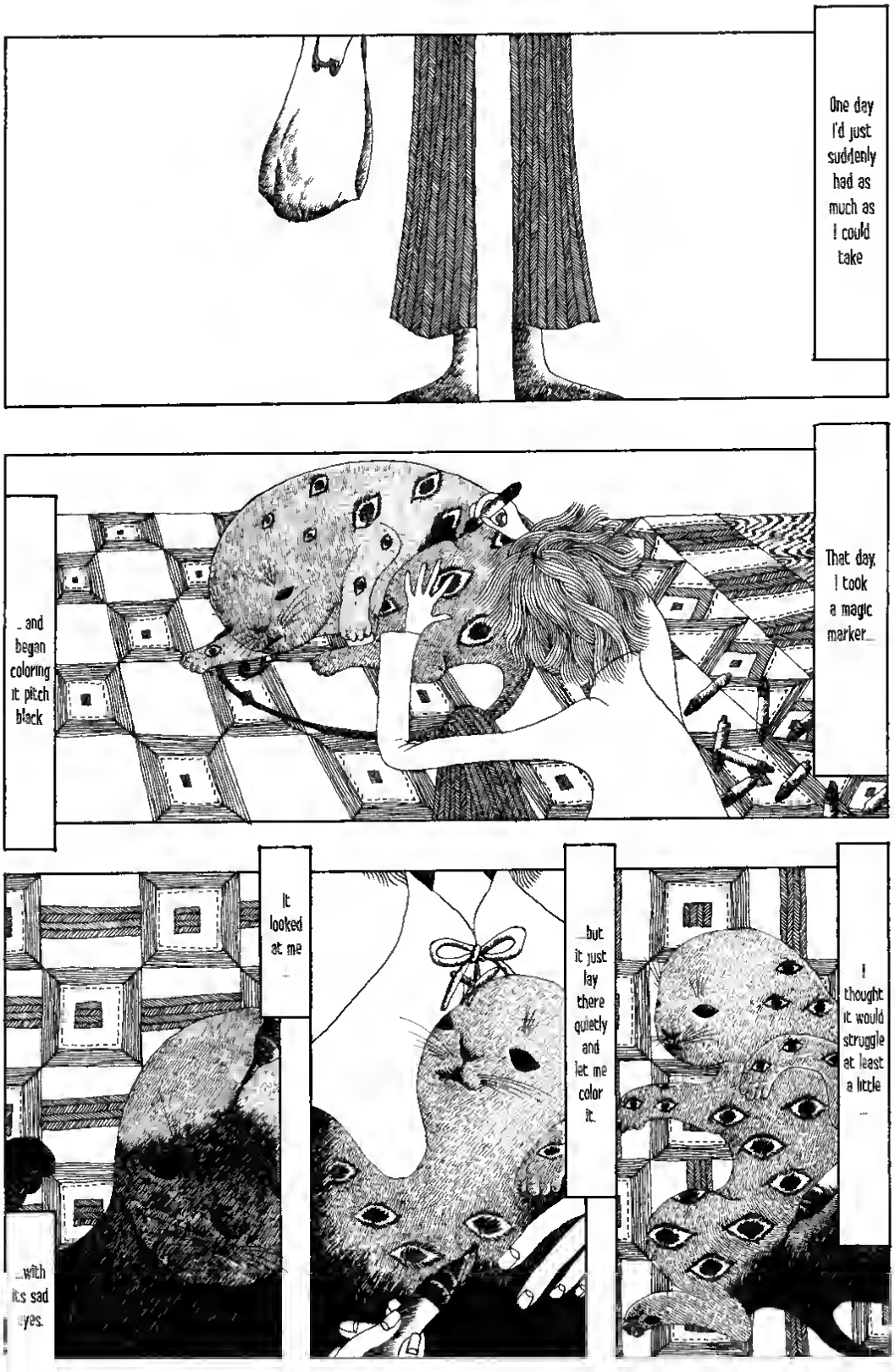

looking at me directly
It clearly avoided ..
Its real eyes were in the normal place where eyes should be, but it hated being looked in the eye.
Maybe it was some sort of camouflage.
It squeaked unhappily when I tried to force it to look at me.
Its eyes...
...were blank and frightened

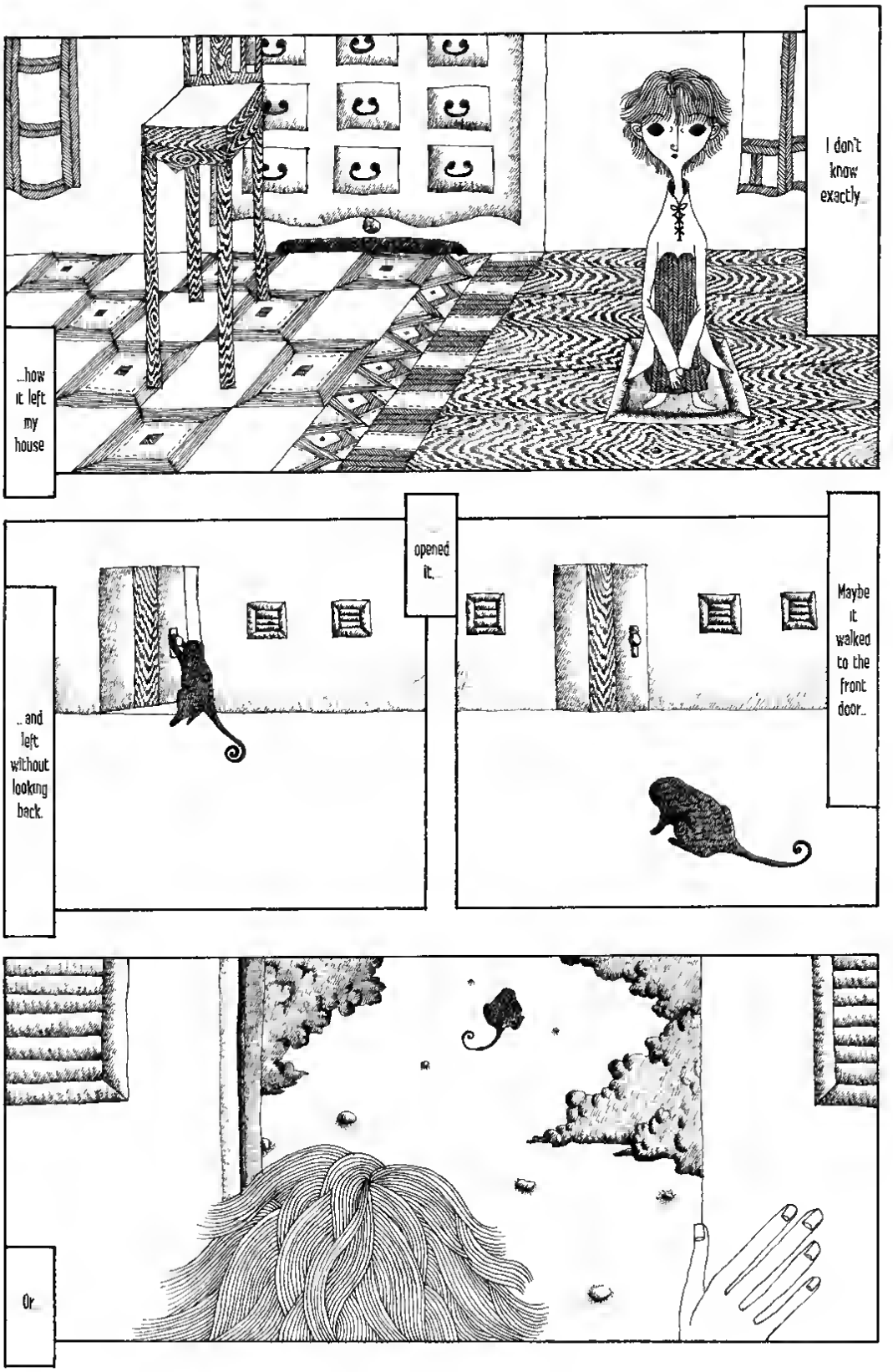

One day my girlfriend complained that it felt like we were being watched.
Now that she mentioned it, it did sort of feel that way.
She said it was creepy, and we should get rid of it.
I told her it wasn't her decision to make and broke up with her.
HIT
I didn't like her saying that.
Now I was alone.
And that was when it started. That was when I started noticing its gaze

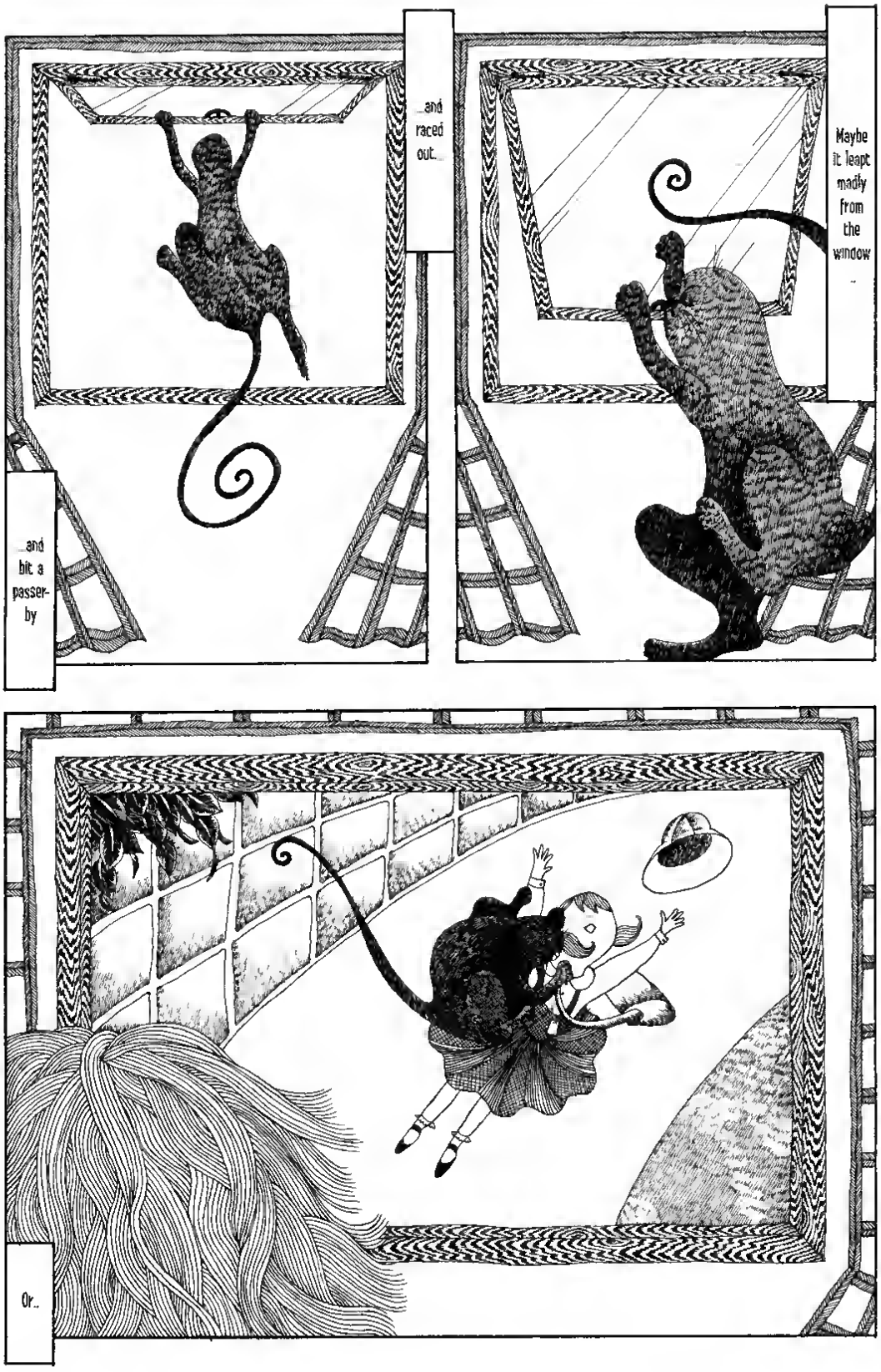

I'd suddenly feel someone watching me and notice it there
It never let me see it move
It had a particular way of moving
I was constantly aware of this feeling of being watched

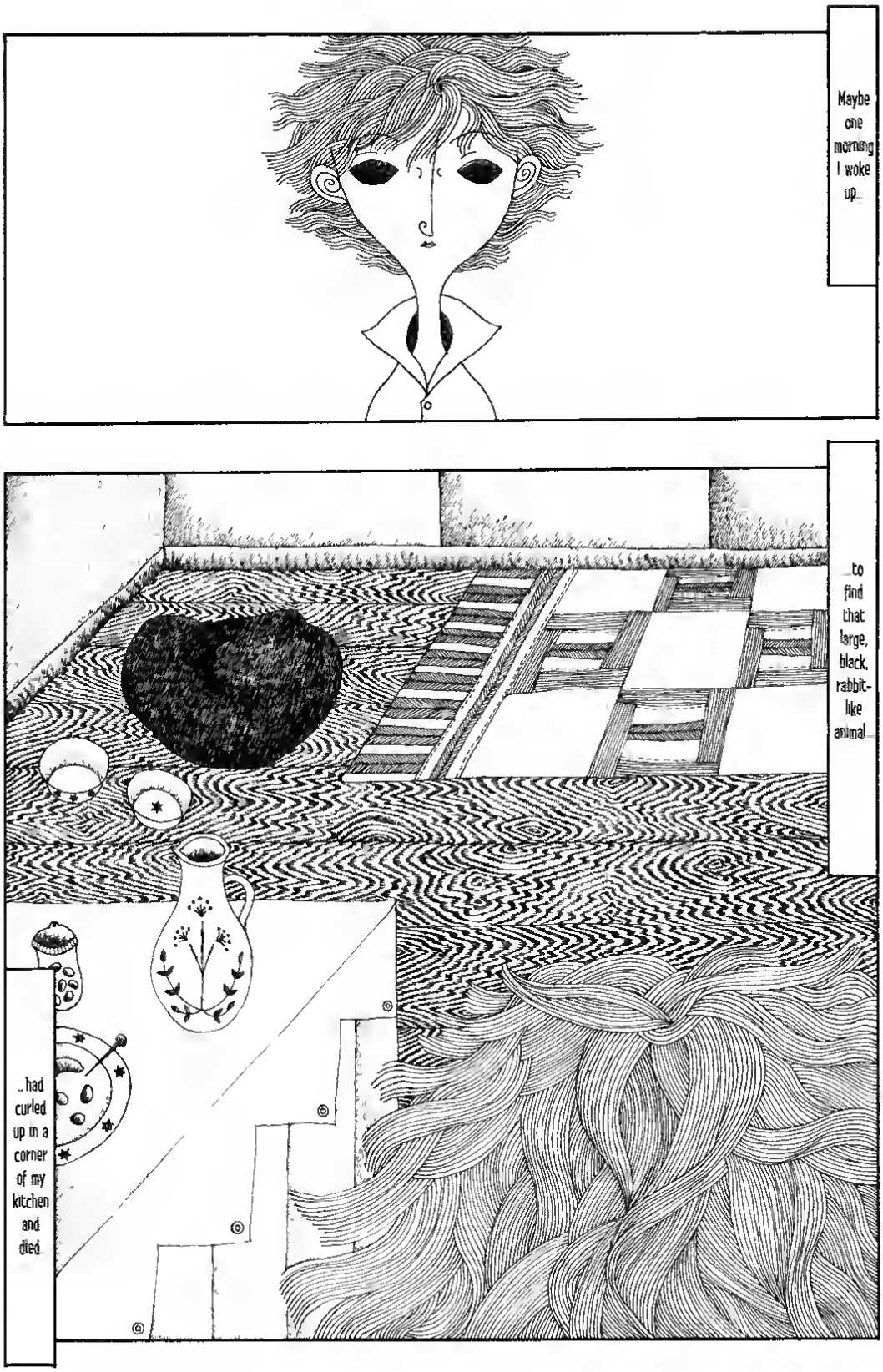

...but sometimes it looked as if it were smirking and sometimes it looked as if it were about to cry
It must have been a trick of the light.
When the wind blew, it looked like it was blinking at me
Though it had been living with me all this time, once I started noticing it, I couldn't stop
It was creepy I didn't like this feeling
something you hate to have done to you
You shouldn't do
It stared at me

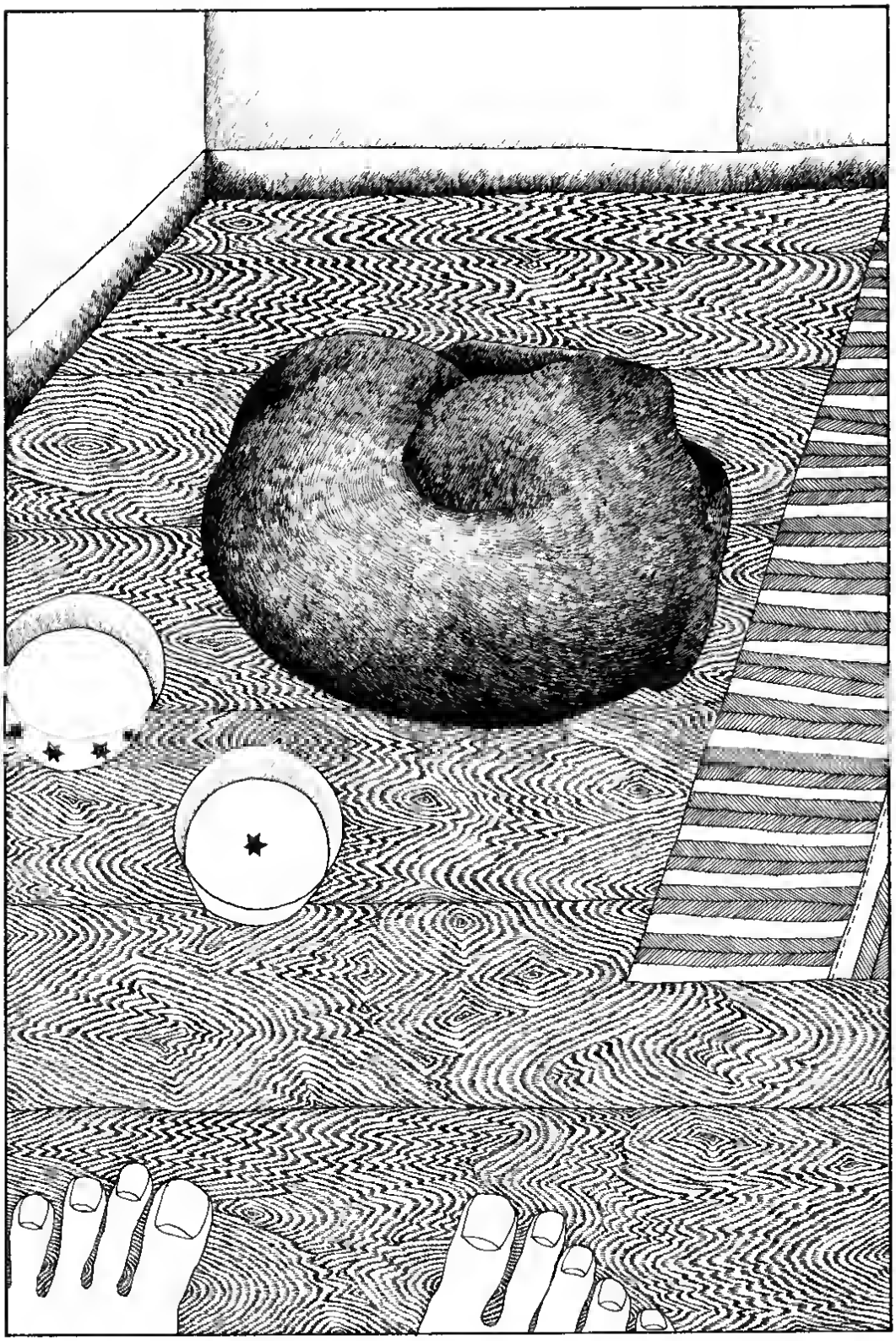

I decided to shave its fur
But when I realized the pattern was on its skin, too
it bothered me even more
I thought about getting rid of it
but I didn't want to be
the same sort of horrible person as my girlfriend


One day I'd just suddenly had as much as I could take
That day, I took a magic marker...
...and began coloring it pitch black
I thought it would struggle at least a little...
...but it just lay there quietly and let me color it.
It looked at me...
...with its sad eyes.


I don't know exactly...
...how it left my house
Maybe it walked to the front door...
opened it...
...and left without looking back.
Or...


...and hit a passer-by
...and raced out...
Maybe it leapt madly from the window...
Or...

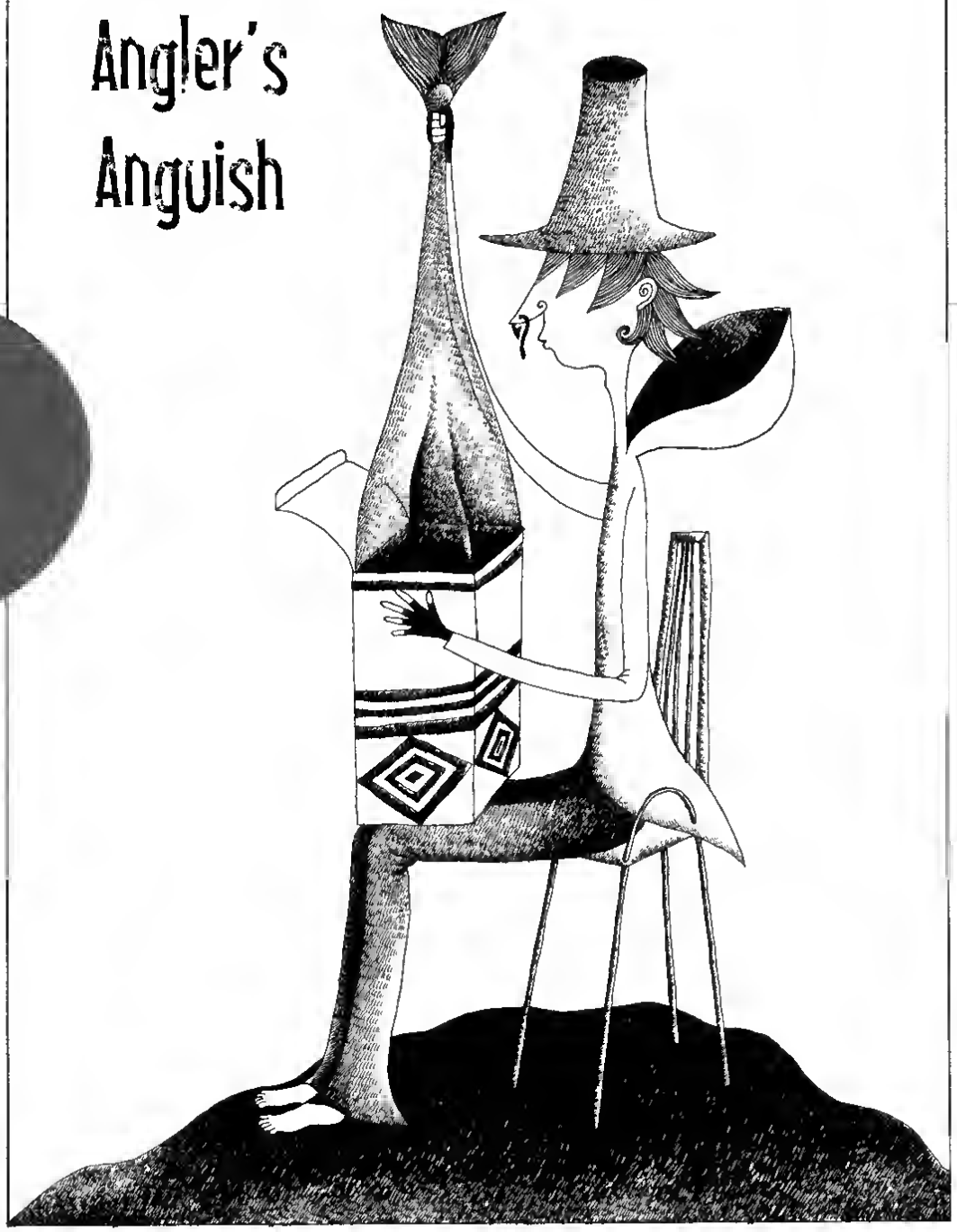

Maybe one morning I woke up...
...to find that large, black, rabbit-like animal...
...had curled up in a corner of my kitchen and died.

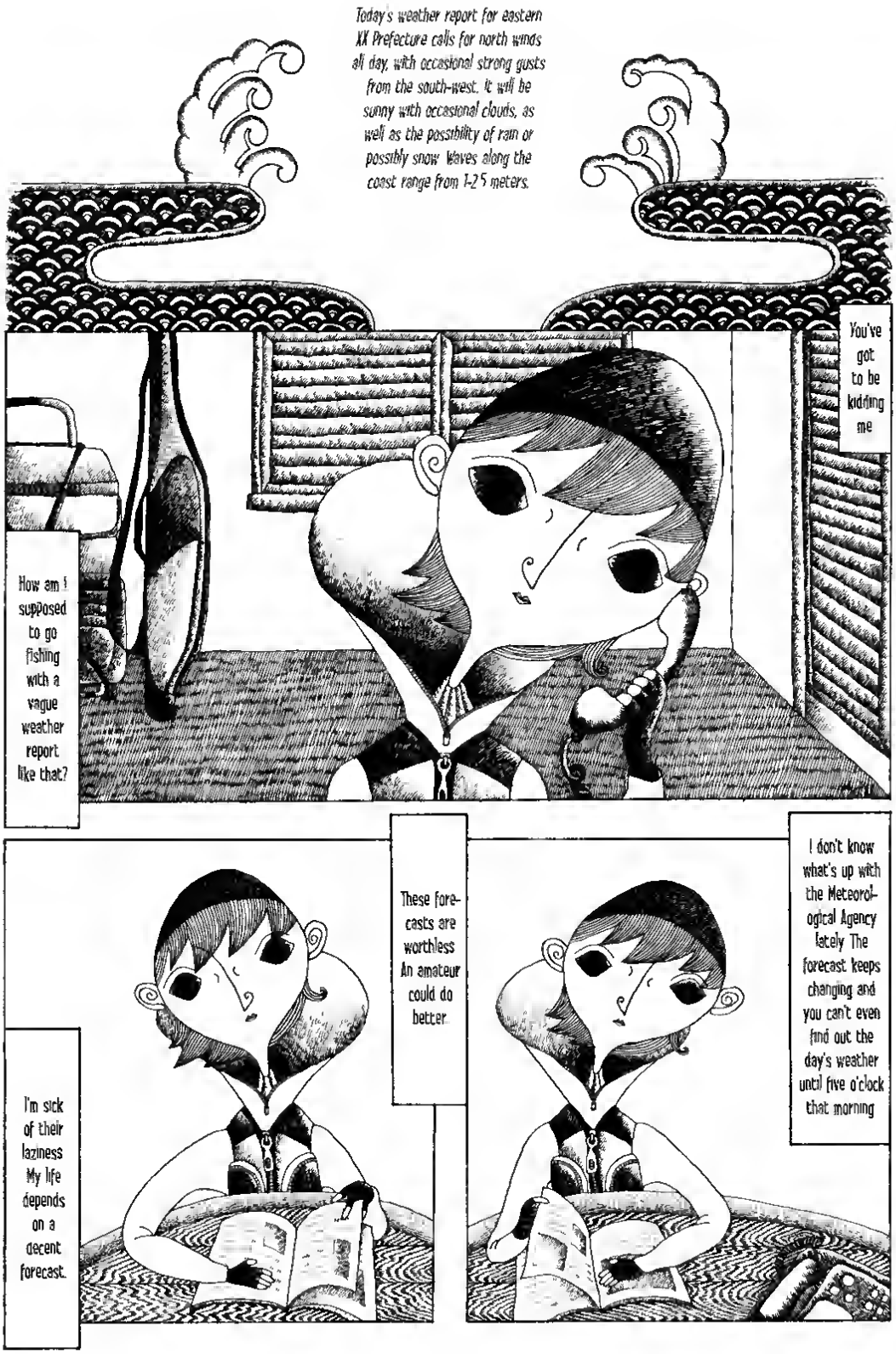


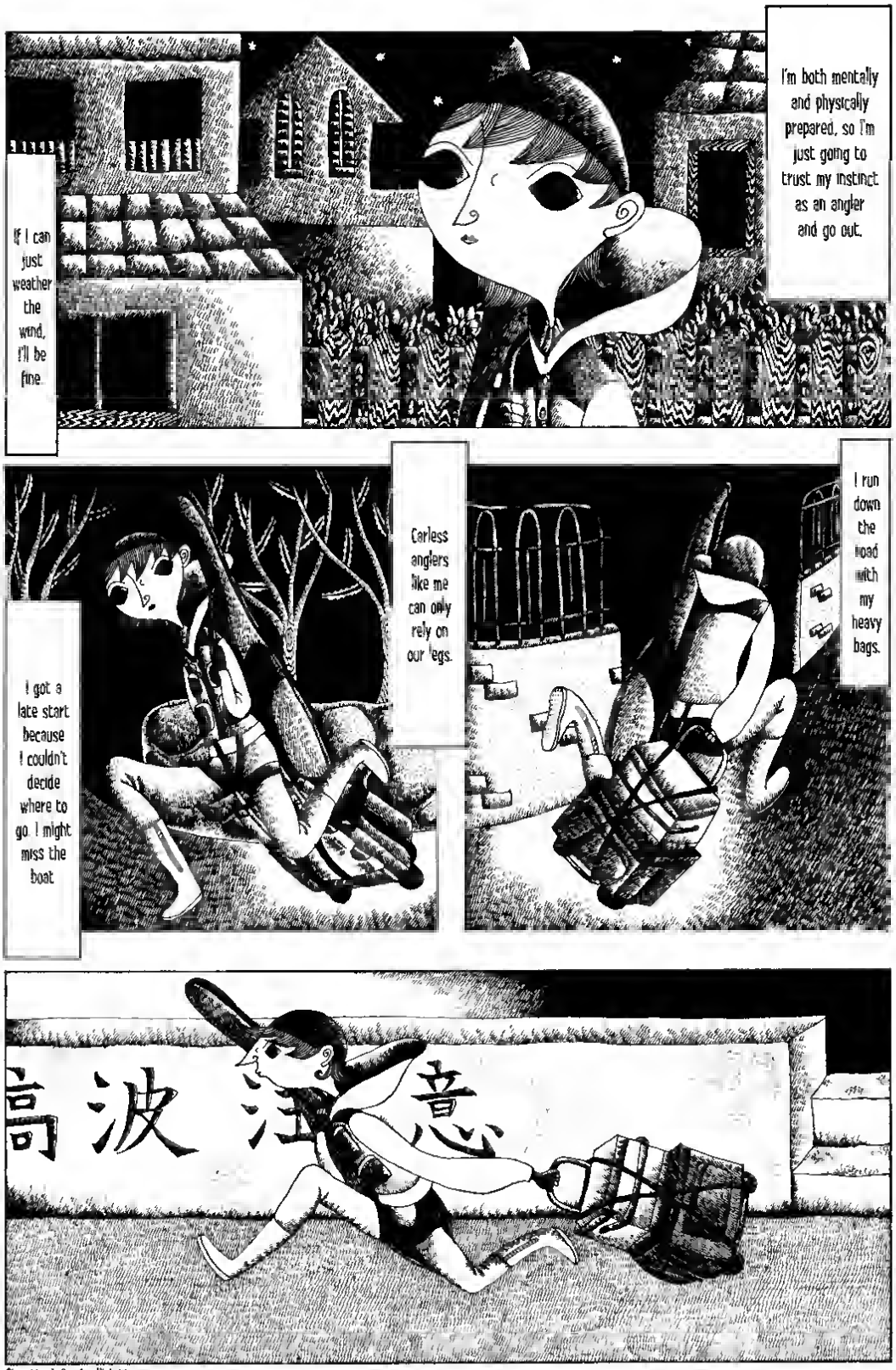
Now I was truly alone.

THE END

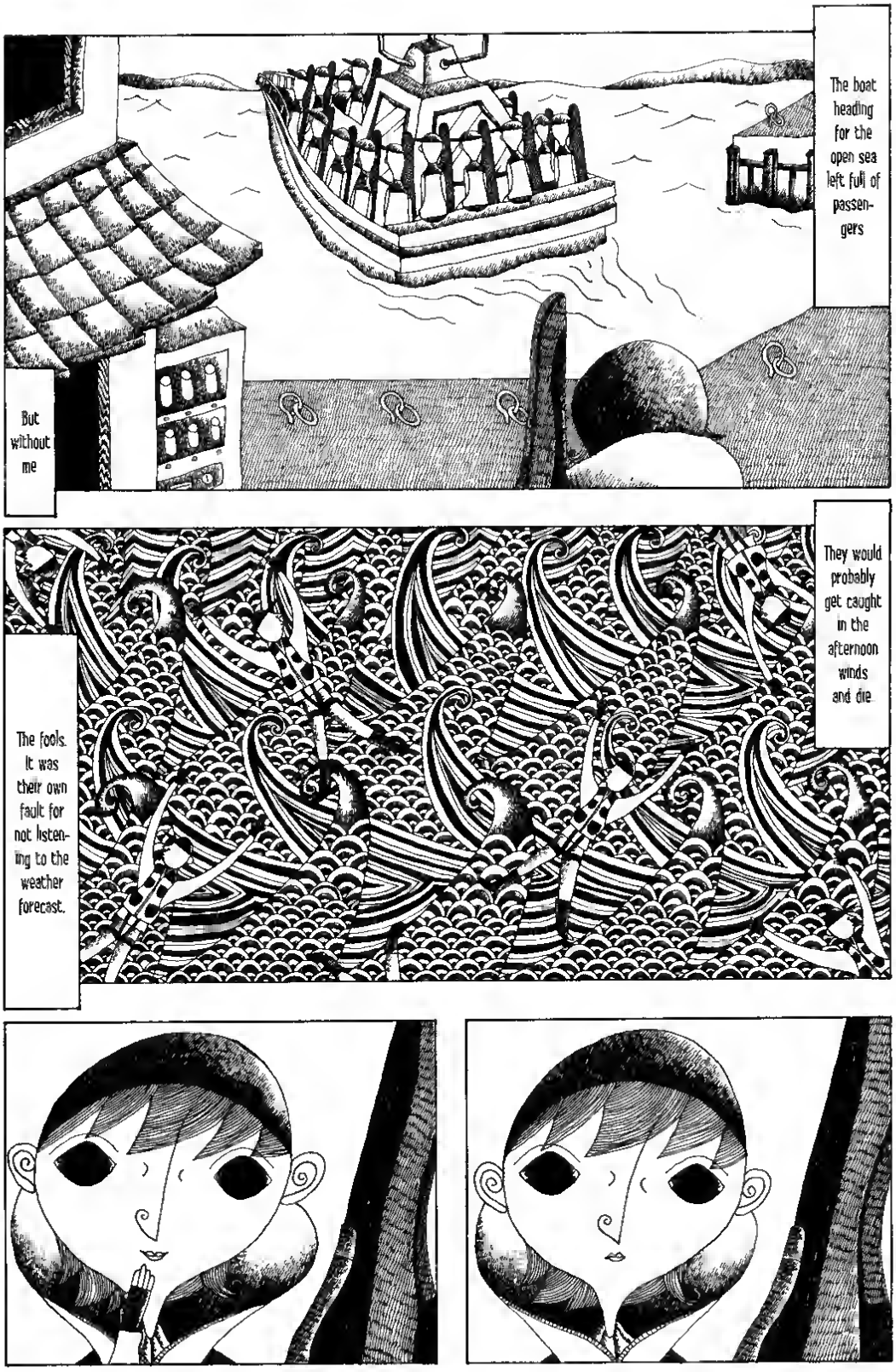
An Angler's Anguish

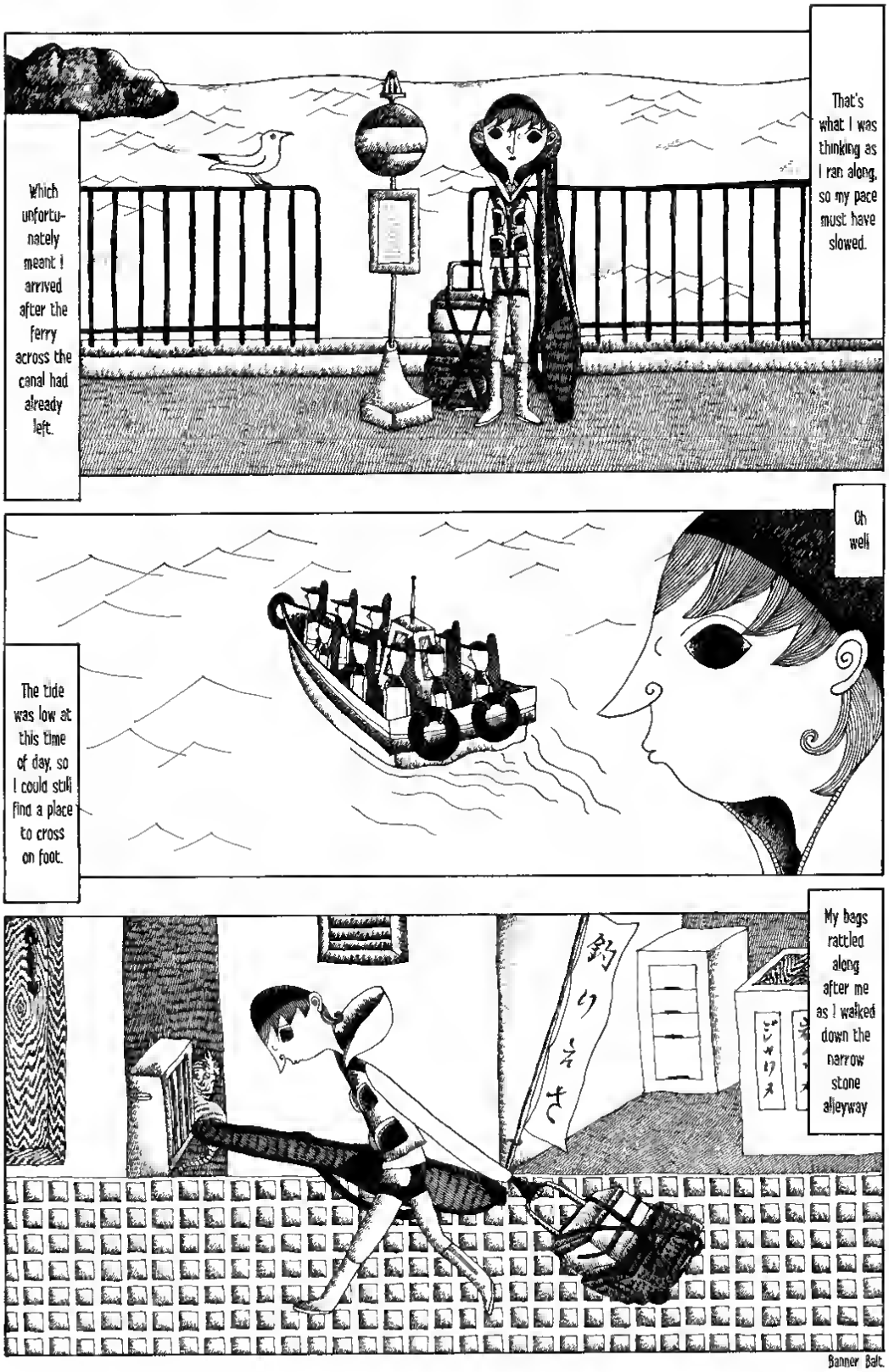


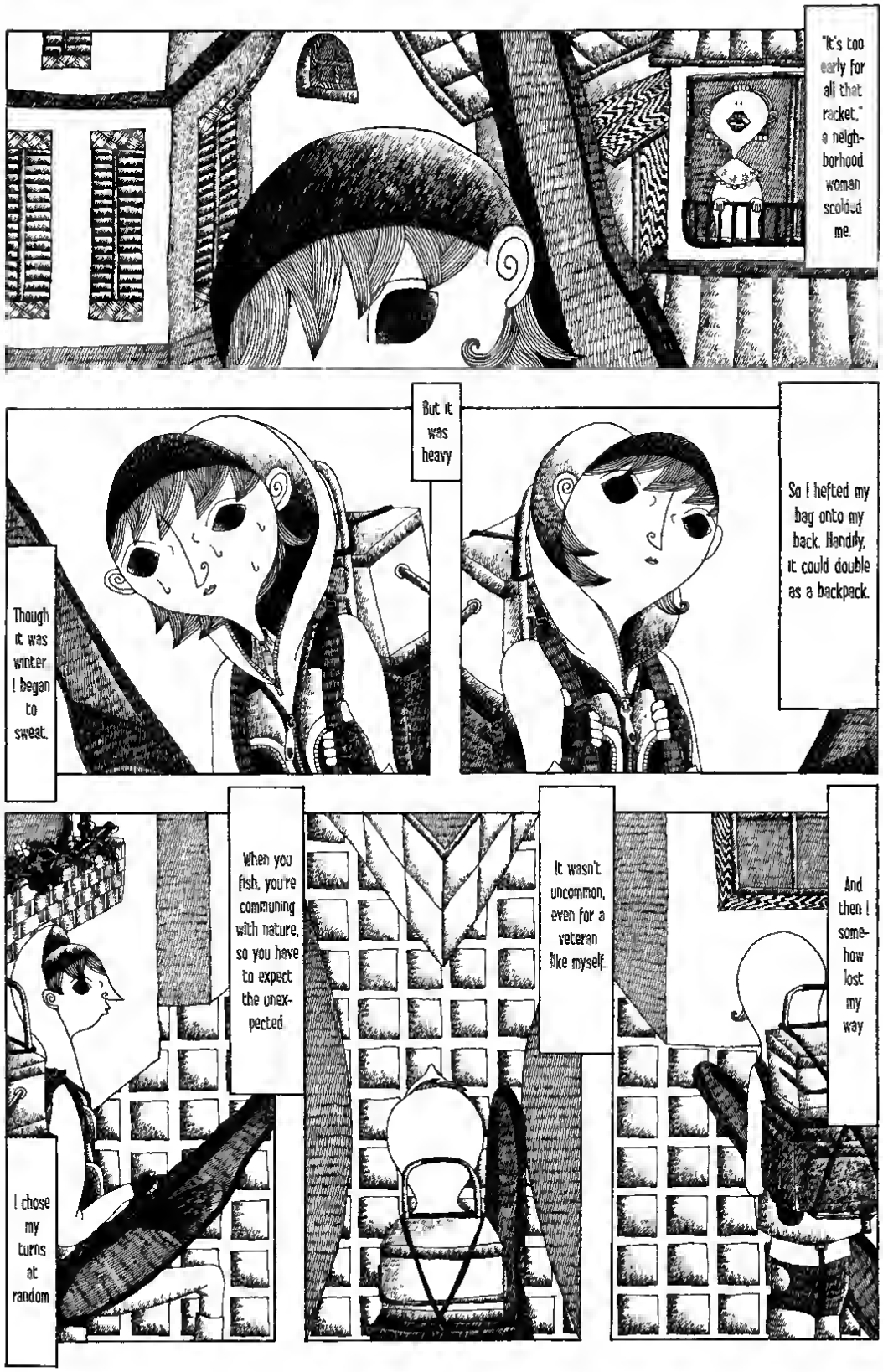

Today's weather report for eastern XX Prefecture calls for north winds all day, with occasional strong gusts from the south-west. It will be sunny with occasional clouds, as well as the possibility of rain or possibly snow. Waves along the coast range from 1-2.5 meters.
You've got to be kidding me
How am I supposed to go fishing with a vague weather report like that?
I don't know what's up with the Meteorological Agency lately. The forecast keeps changing and you can't even find out the day's weather until five o'clock that morning
These forecasts are worthless. An amateur could do better.
I'm sick of their laziness. My life depends on a decent forecast.

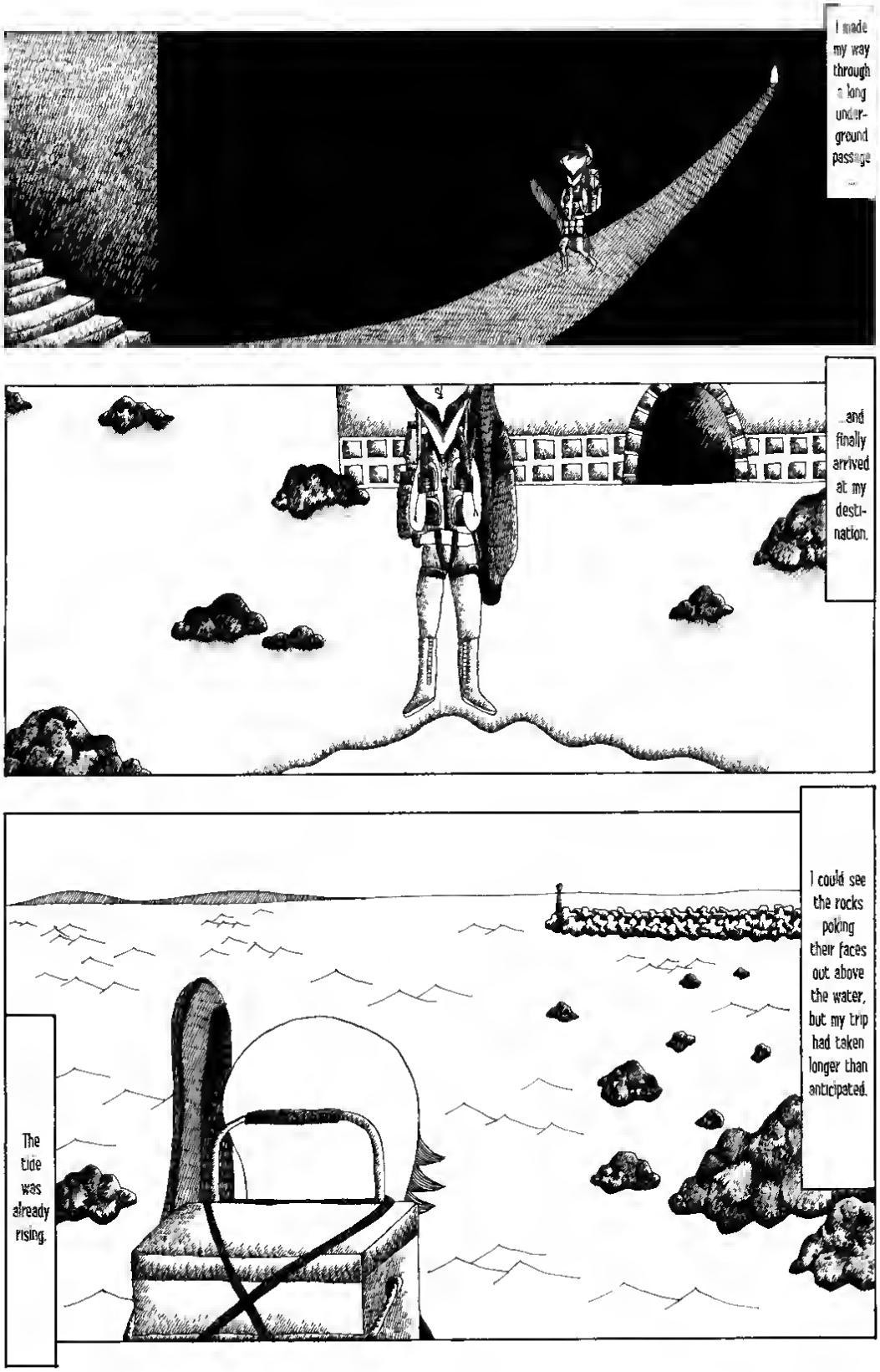

If I can just weather the wind, I'll be fine.
I'm both mentally and physically prepared, so I'm just going to trust my instinct as an angler and go out.
I got a late start because I couldn't decide where to go. I might miss the boat.
Carless anglers like me can only rely on our legs.
I run down the road with my heavy bags.
高波注意

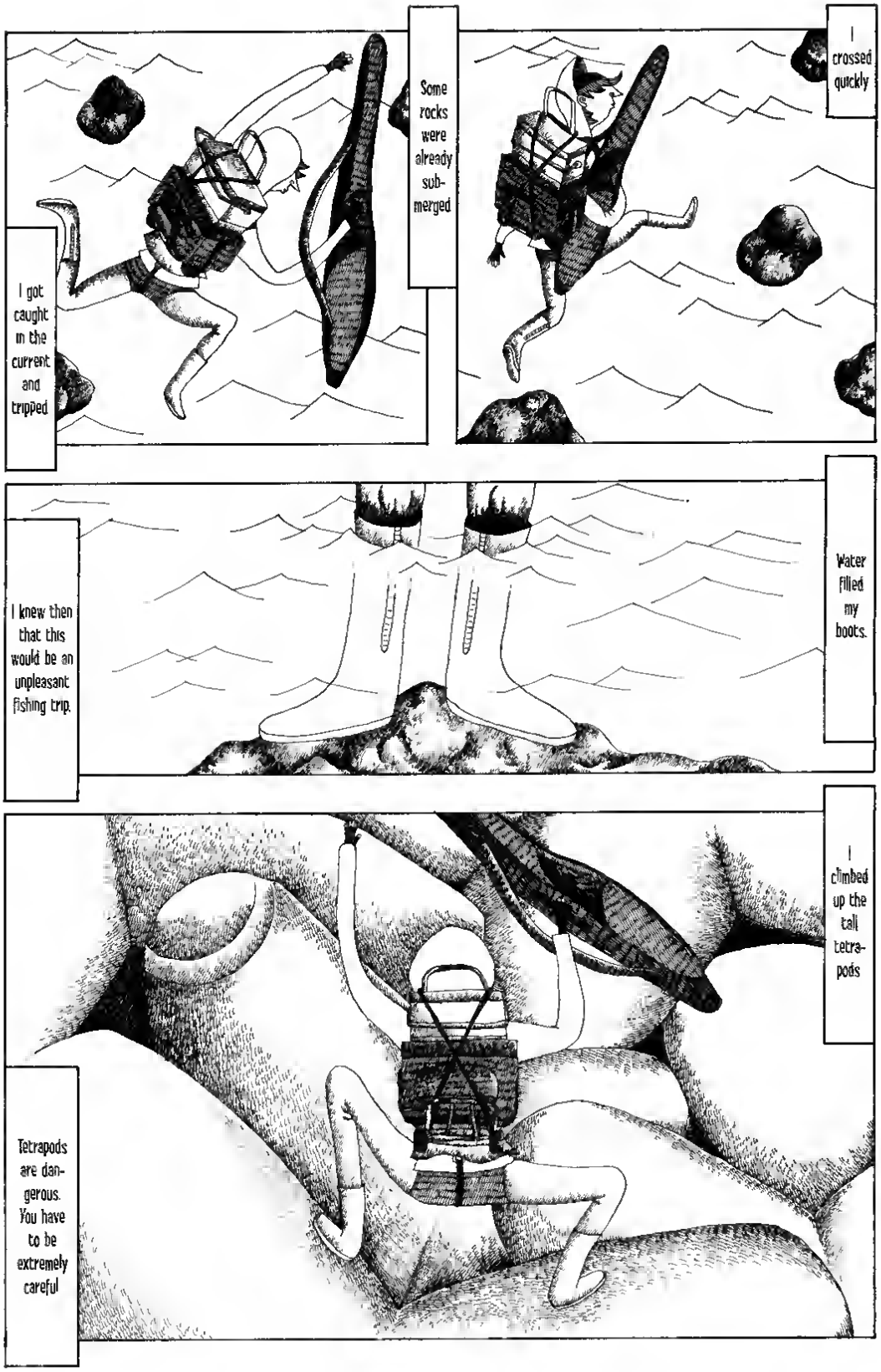
Sign: Watch Out for High Waves

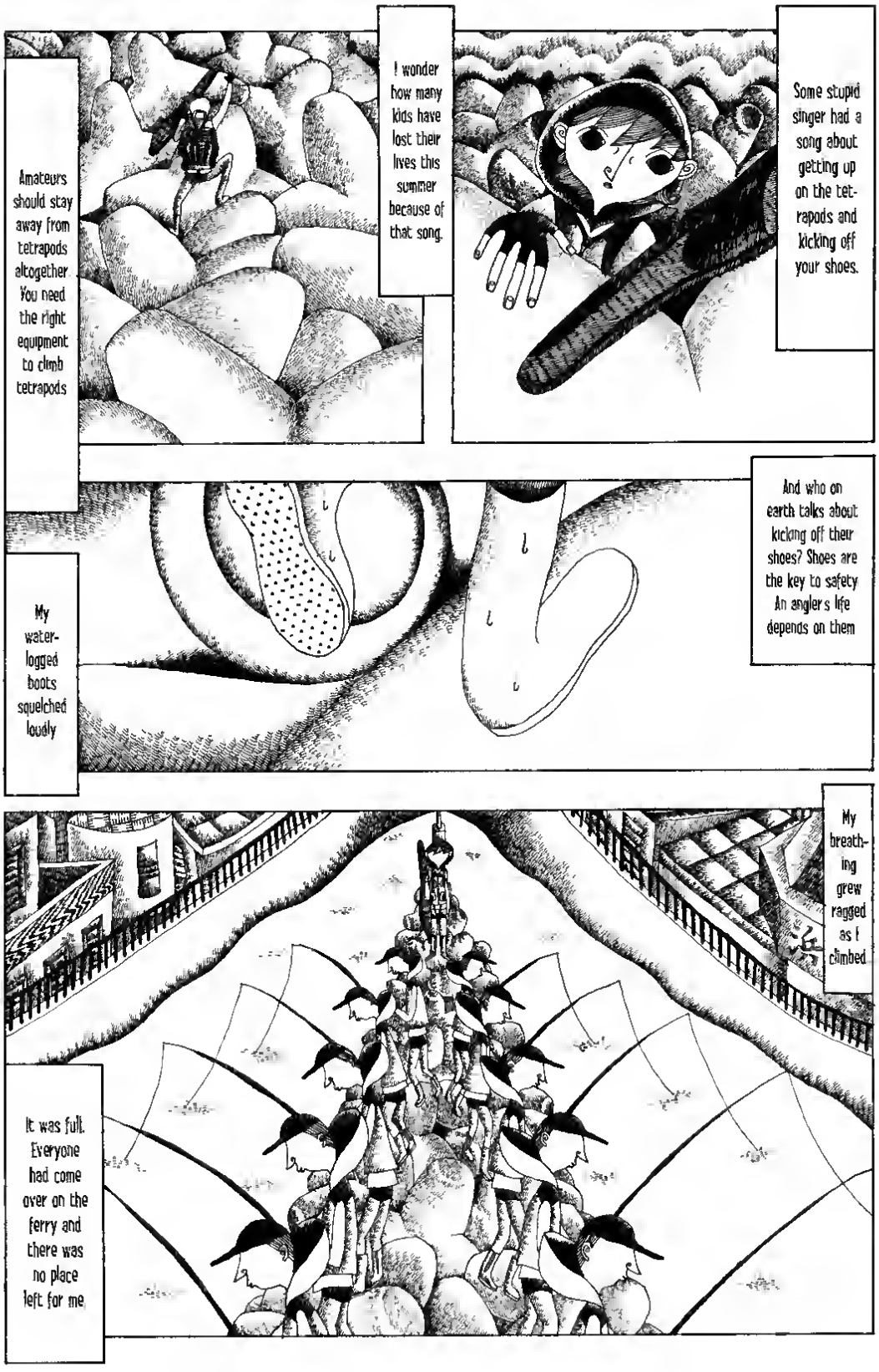

The boat heading for the open sea left full of passengers
But without me
They would probably get caught in the afternoon winds and die
The fools. It was their own fault for not listening to the weather forecast.

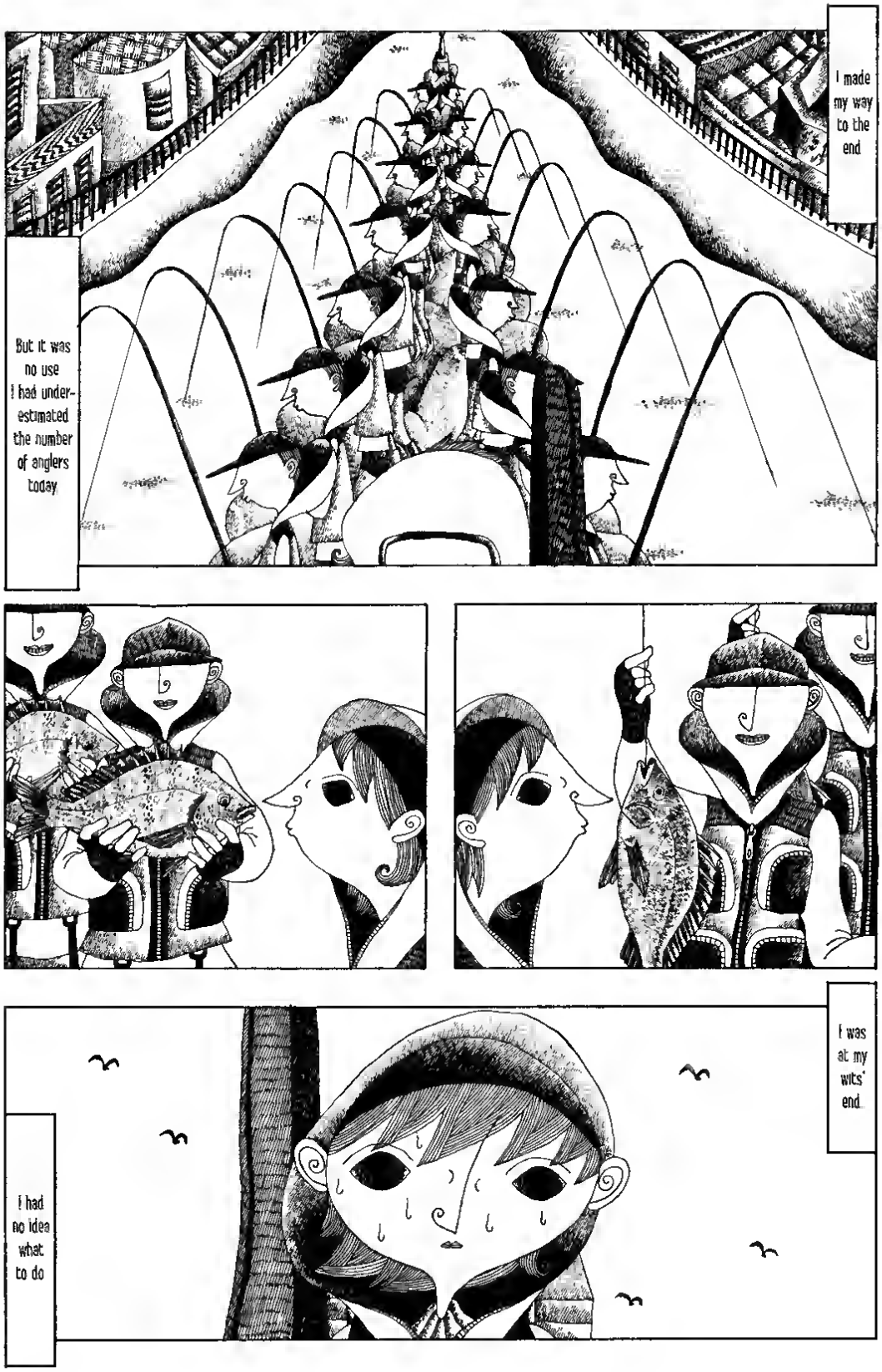

That's what I was thinking as I ran along, so my pace must have slowed.
Which unfortunately meant I arrived after the ferry across the canal had already left.
Oh well
The tide was low at this time of day, so I could still find a place to cross on foot.
My bags rattled along after me as I walked down the narrow stone alleyway
釣りえさ
Banner Bait

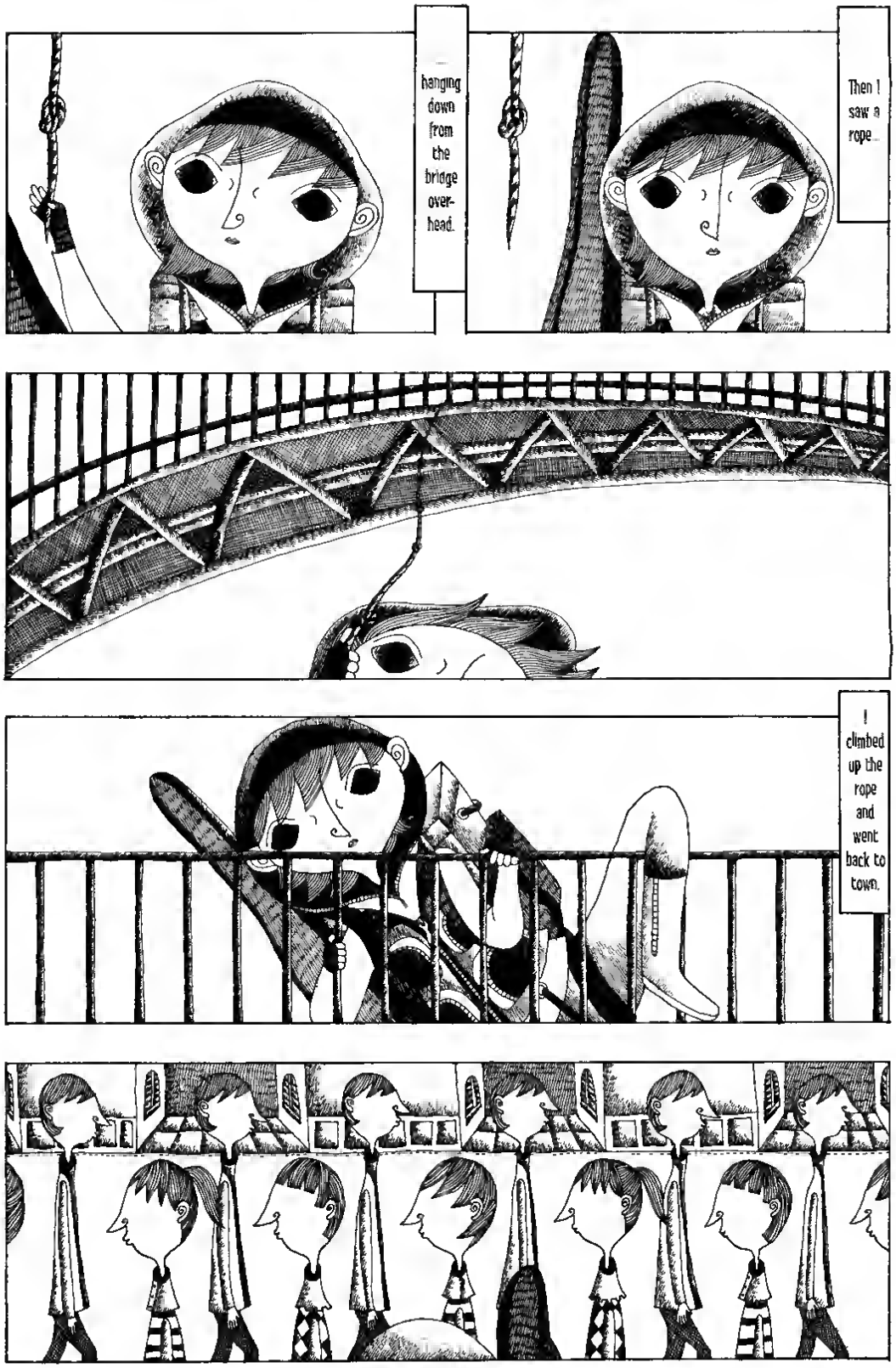

"It's too early for all that racket," a neighborhood woman scolded me.
But it was heavy
So I hefted my bag onto my back. Handily, it could double as a backpack.
Though it was winter, I began to sweat.
When you fish, you're communing with nature, so you have to expect the unexpected.
It wasn't uncommon, even for a veteran like myself.
And then I somehow lost my way.
I chose my turns at random.

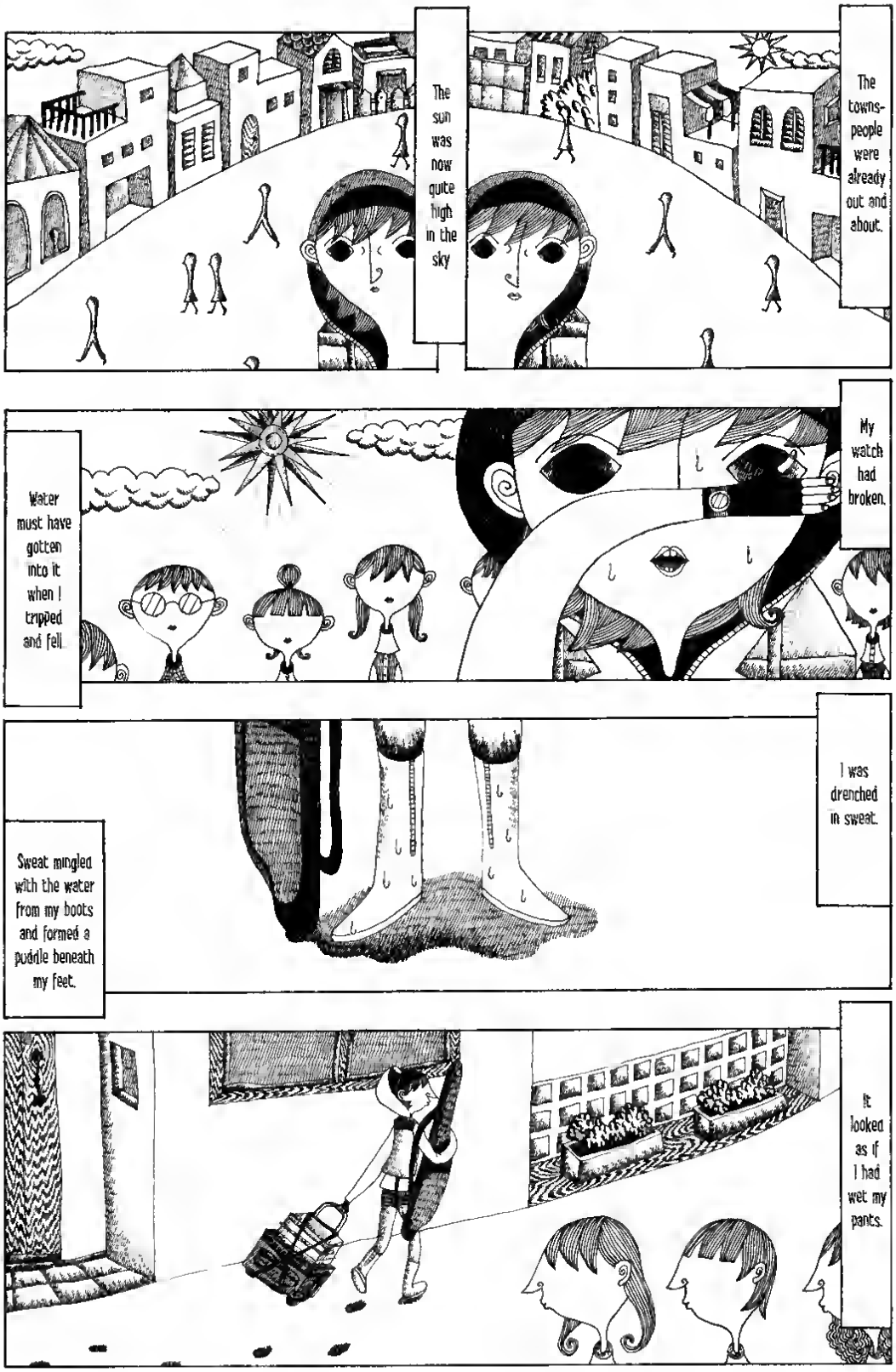

I made my way through a long underground passage...
...and finally arrived at my destination.
I could see the rocks poking their faces out above the water, but my trip had taken longer than anticipated.
The tide was already rising.

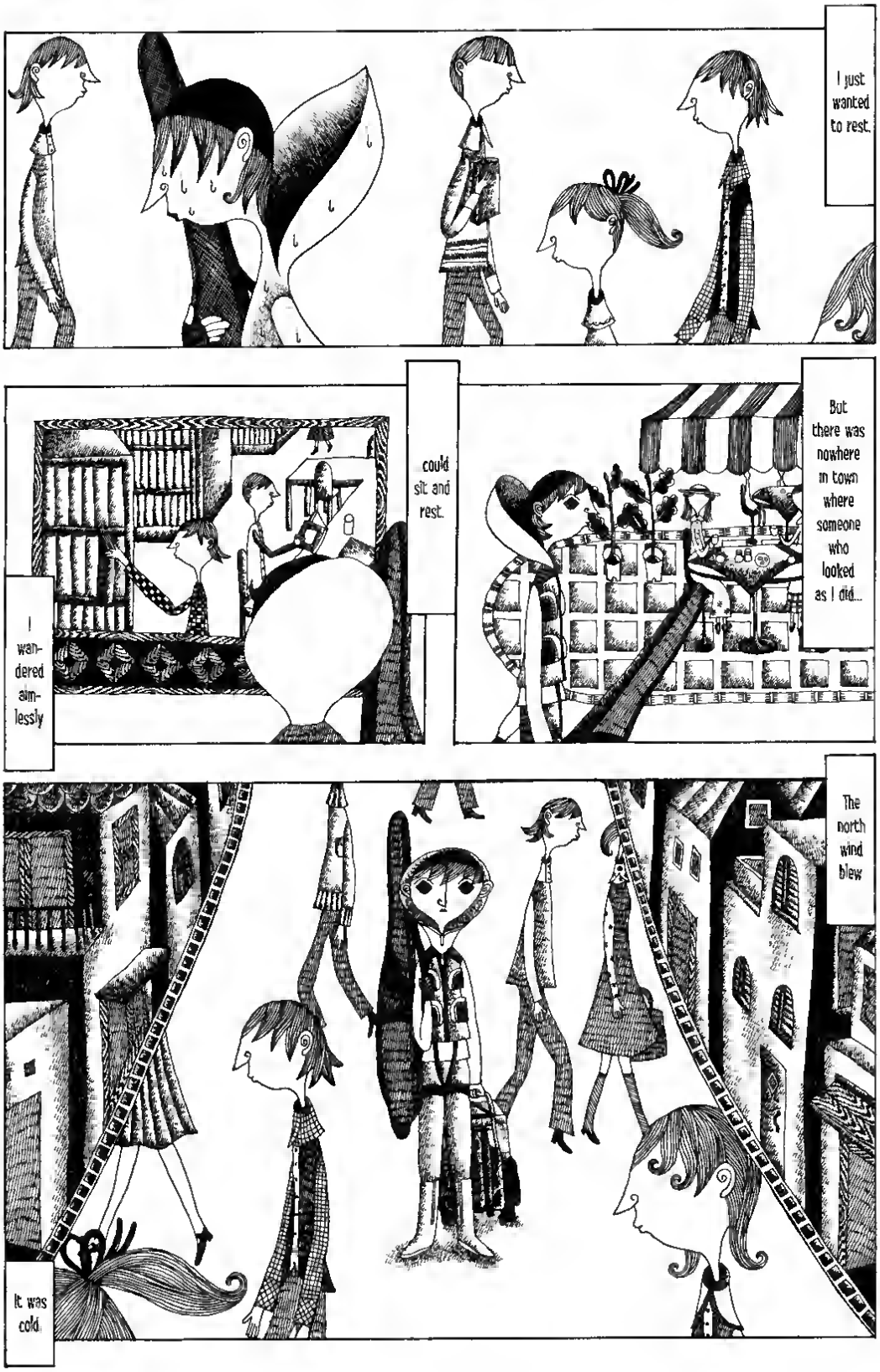

I got caught in the current and tripped
Some rocks were already submerged
I crossed quickly
I knew then that this would be an unpleasant fishing trip.
Water filled my boots.
Tetrapods are dangerous. You have to be extremely careful
I climbed up the tall tetrapods

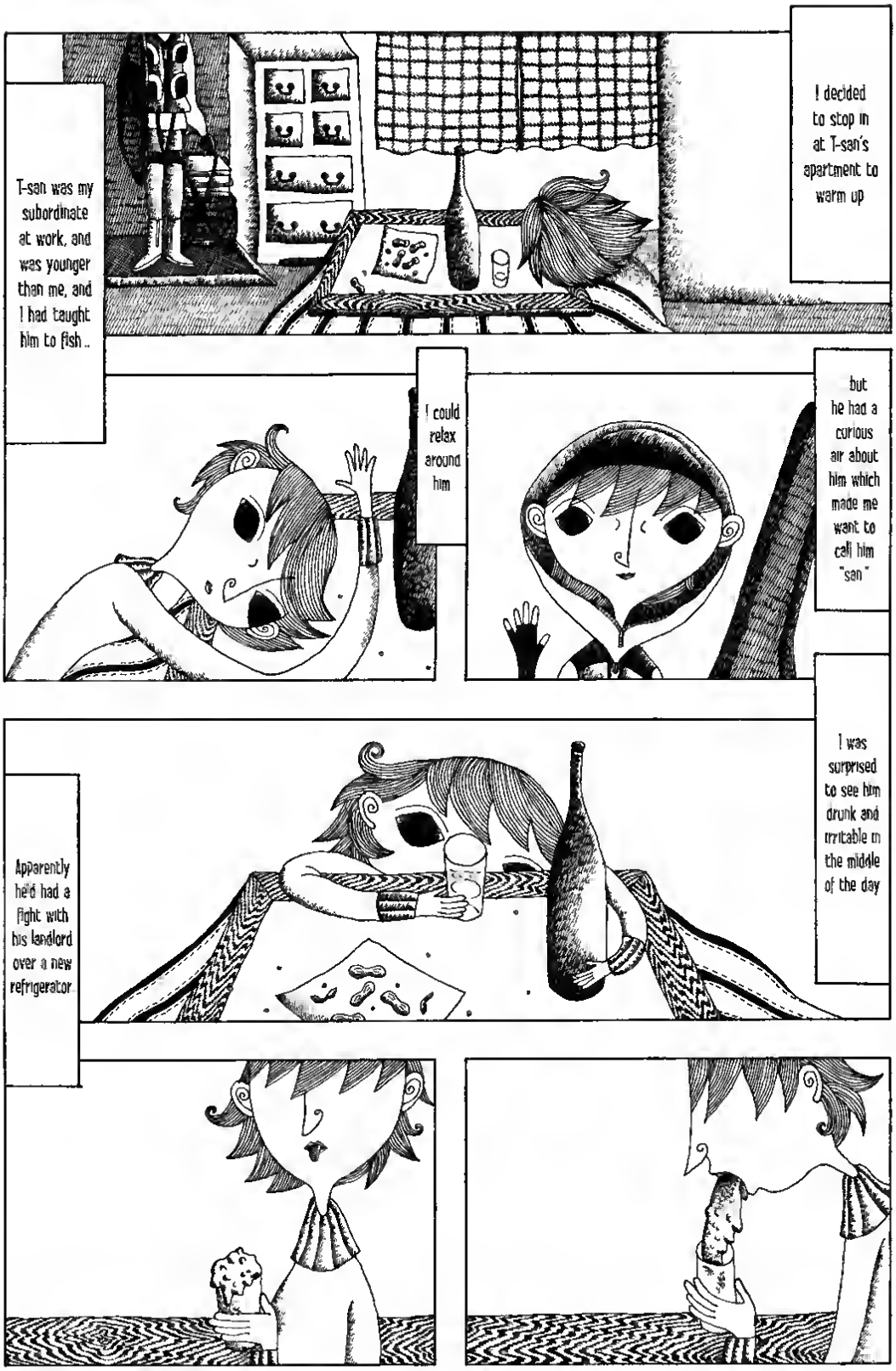

Amateurs should stay away from tetrapods altogether. You need the right equipment to climb tetrapods
I wonder how many kids have lost their lives this summer because of that song.
Some stupid singer had a song about getting up on the tetrapods and kicking off your shoes.
My water-logged boots squelched loudly
And who on earth talks about kicking off their shoes? Shoes are the key to safety. An angler's life depends on them
My breathing grew ragged as I climbed
It was full. Everyone had come over on the ferry and there was no place left for me.

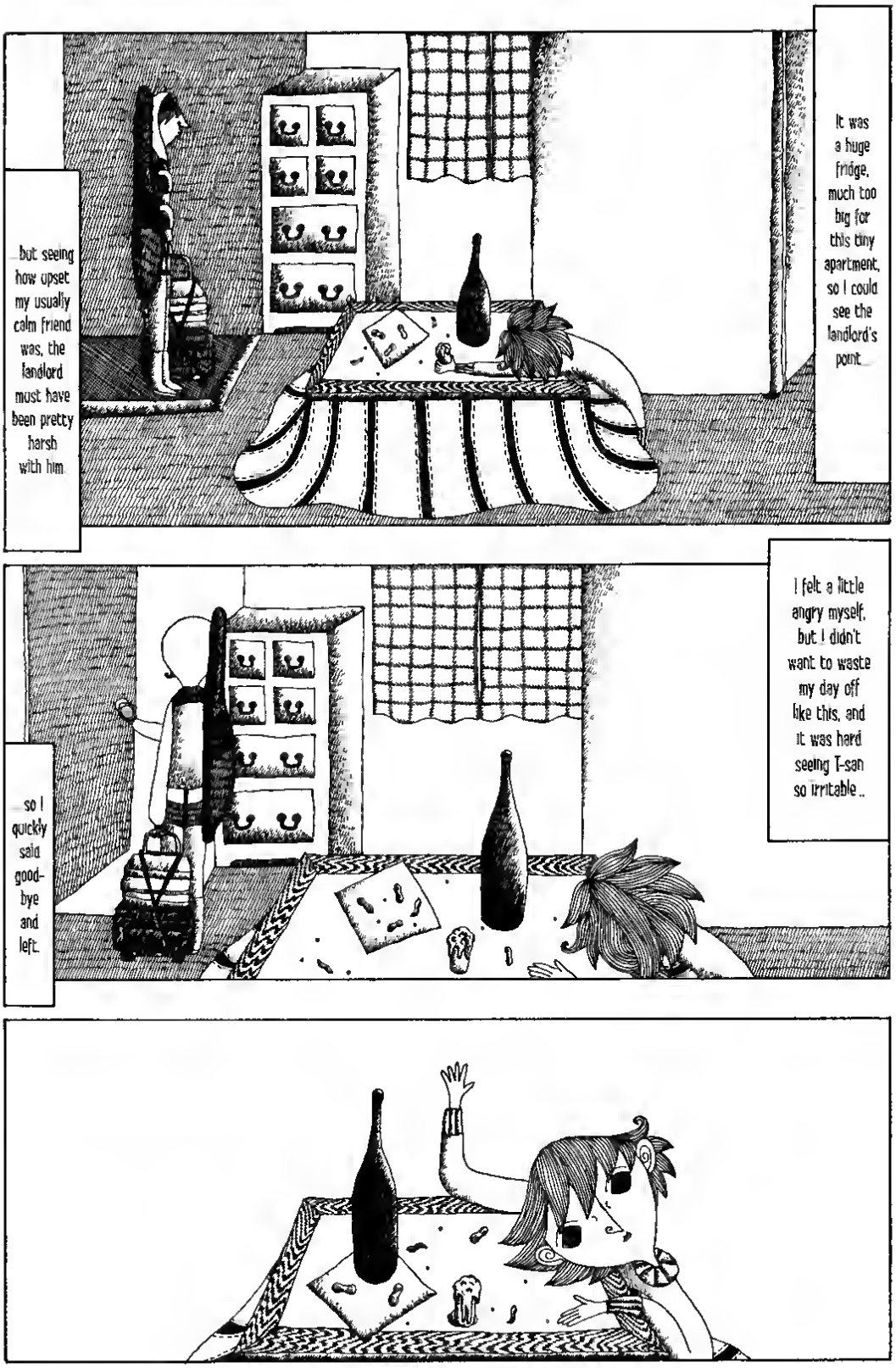

I made my way to the end
But it was no use I had underestimated the number of anglers today
I was at my wits' end
I had no idea what to do

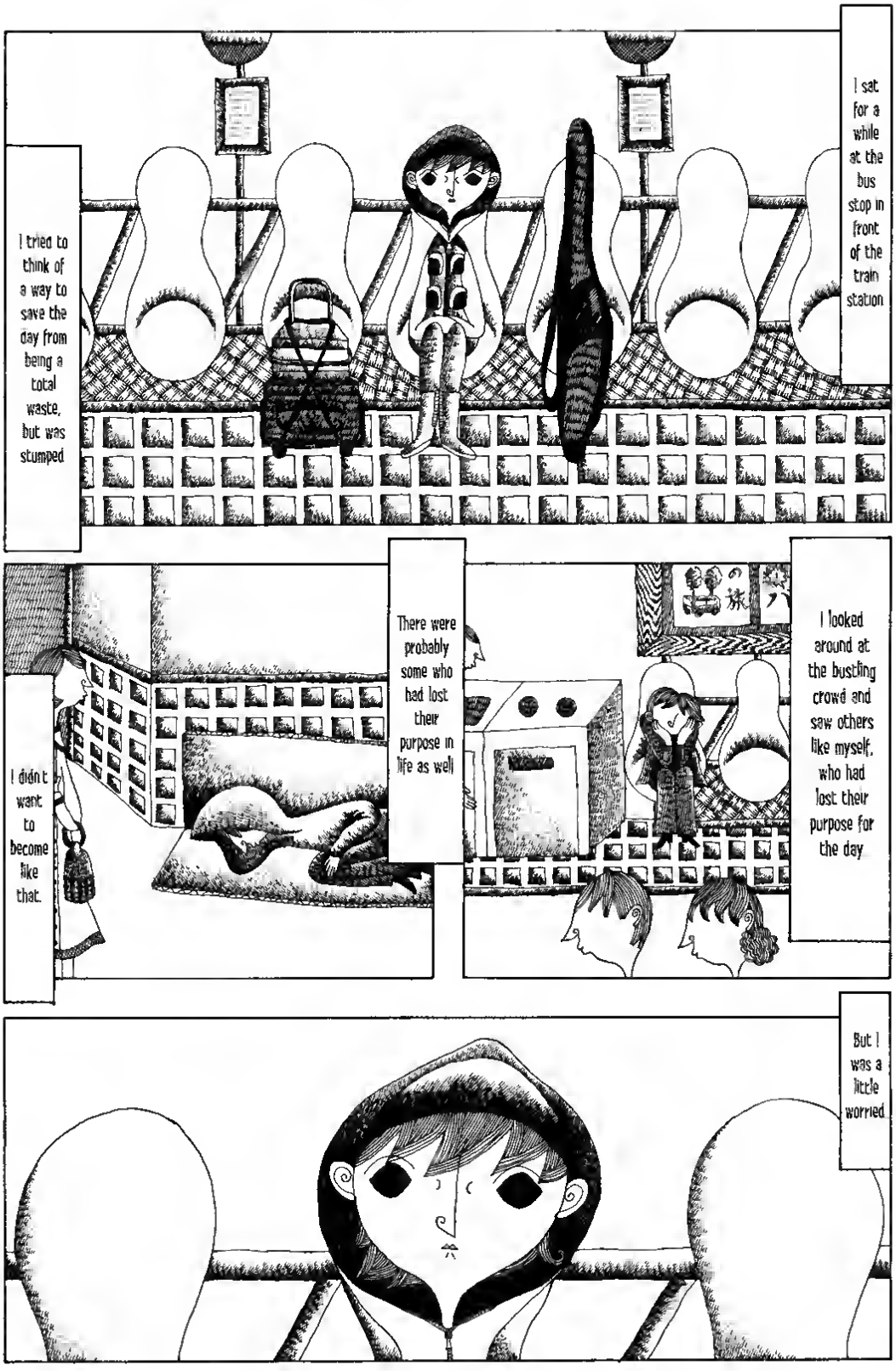

hanging down from the bridge overhead.
Then I saw a rope...
I climbed up the rope and went back to town.


The sun was now quite high in the sky
The townspeople were already out and about.
Water must have gotten into it when I tripped and fell.
My watch had broken.
Sweat mingled with the water from my boots and formed a puddle beneath my feet.
I was drenched in sweat.
It looked as if I had wet my pants.

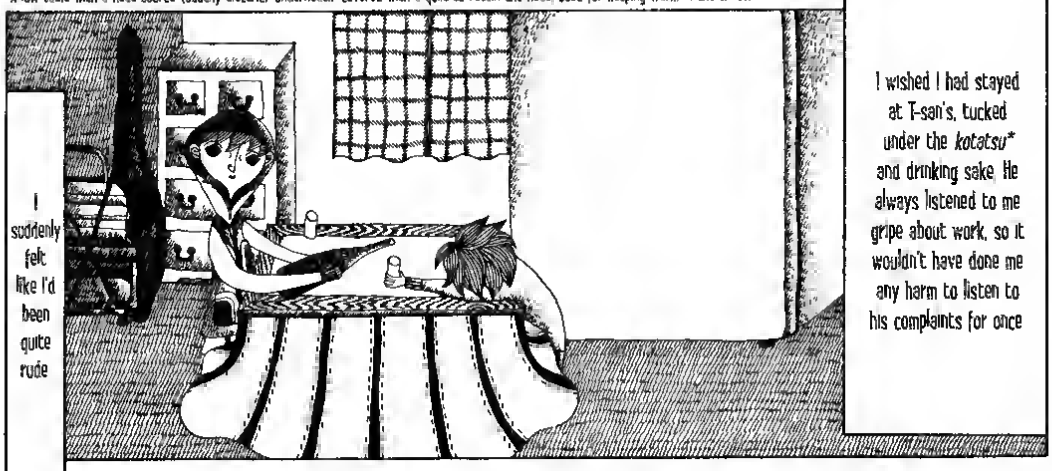

I just wanted to rest.
But there was nowhere in town where someone who looked as I did...
could sit and rest.
I wandered aimlessly
The north wind blew
It was cold.

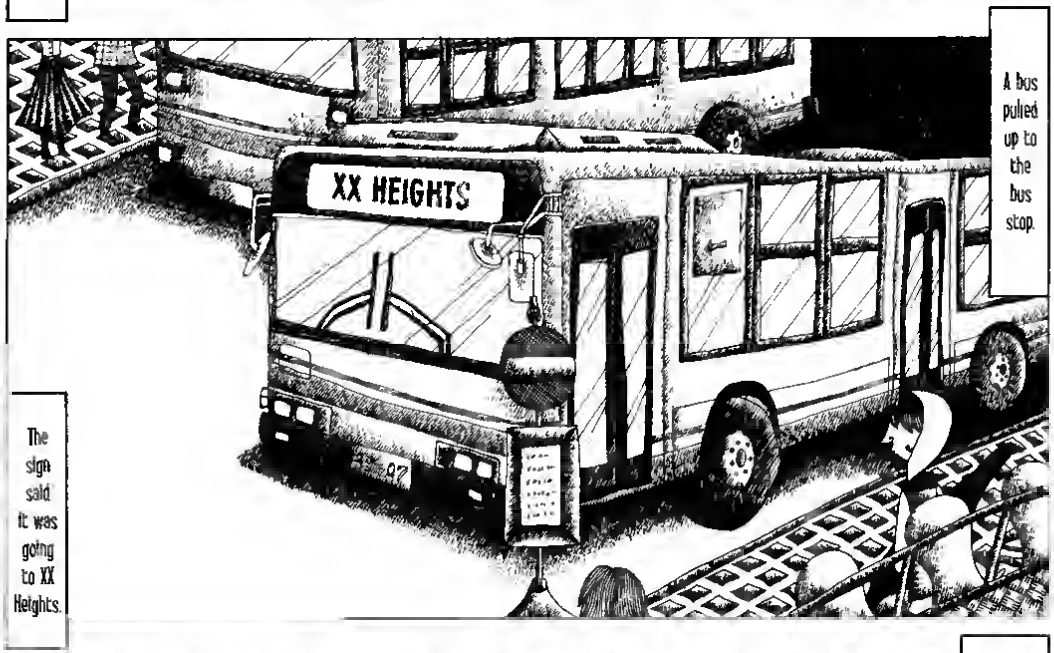

I decided to stop in at T-san's apartment to warm up
T-san was my subordinate at work, and was younger than me, and I had taught him to fish..
I could relax around him
but he had a curious air about him which made me want to call him "san"
I was surprised to see him drunk and irritable in the middle of the day
Apparently he'd had a fight with his landlord over a new refrigerator

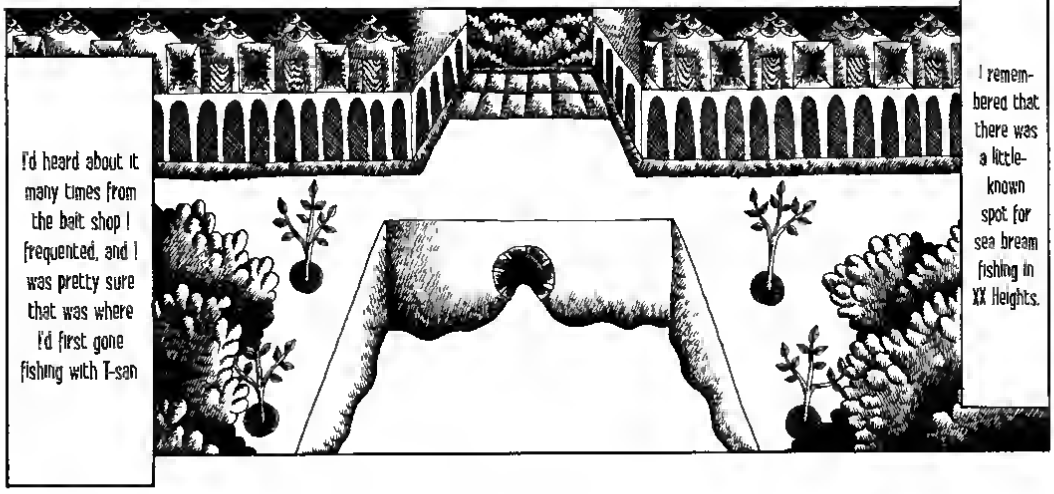

It was a huge fridge, much too big for this tiny apartment, so I could see the landlord's point...
...but seeing how upset my usually calm friend was, the landlord must have been pretty harsh with him.
I felt a little angry myself, but I didn't want to waste my day off like this, and it was hard seeing T-san so irritable...
...so I quickly said good-bye and left.

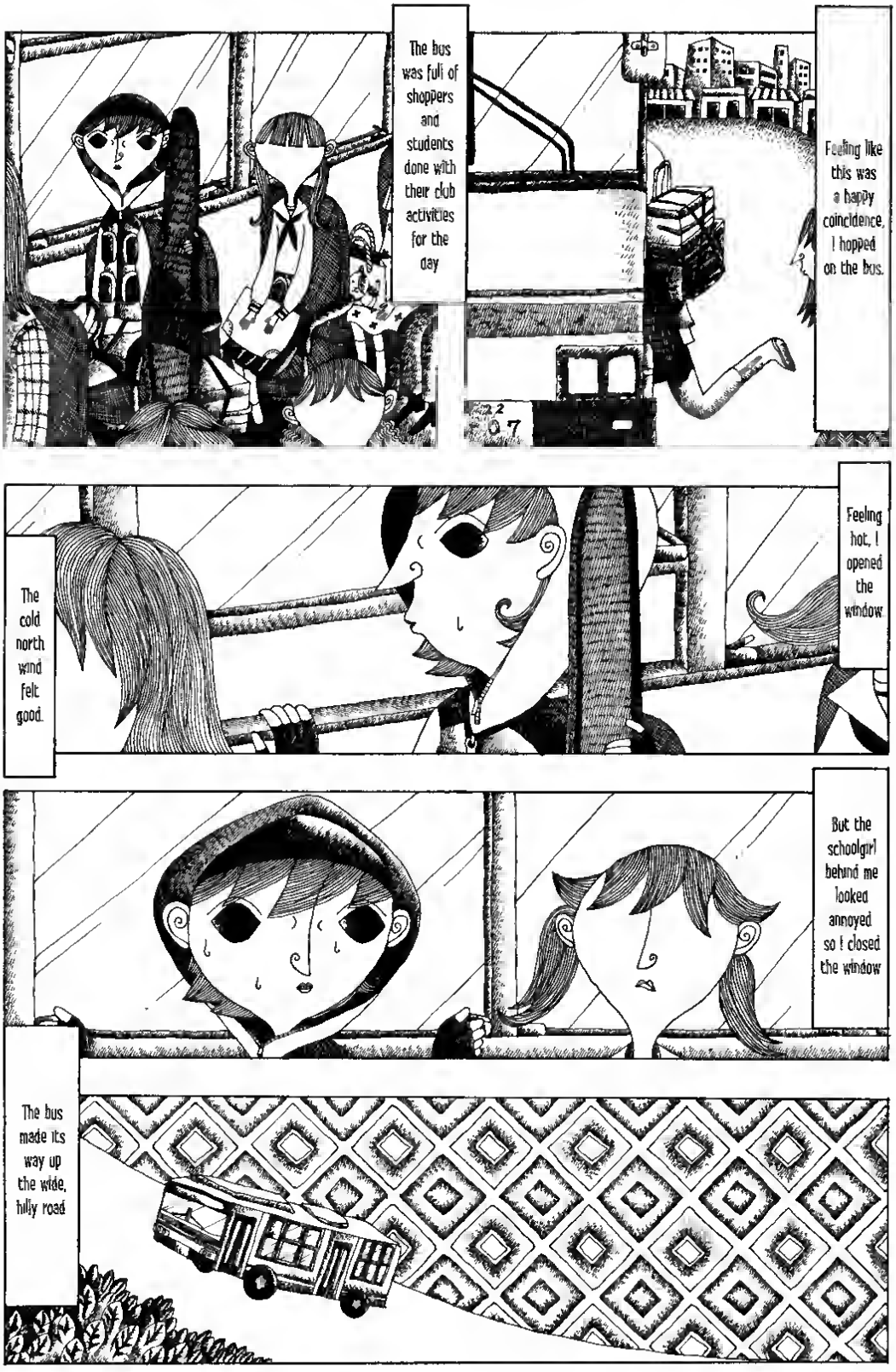

I tried to think of a way to save the day from being a total waste, but was stumped
I sat for a while at the bus stop in front of the train station
I didn't want to become like that.
There were probably some who had lost their purpose in life as well
I looked around at the bustling crowd and saw others like myself, who had lost their purpose for the day
But I was a little worried

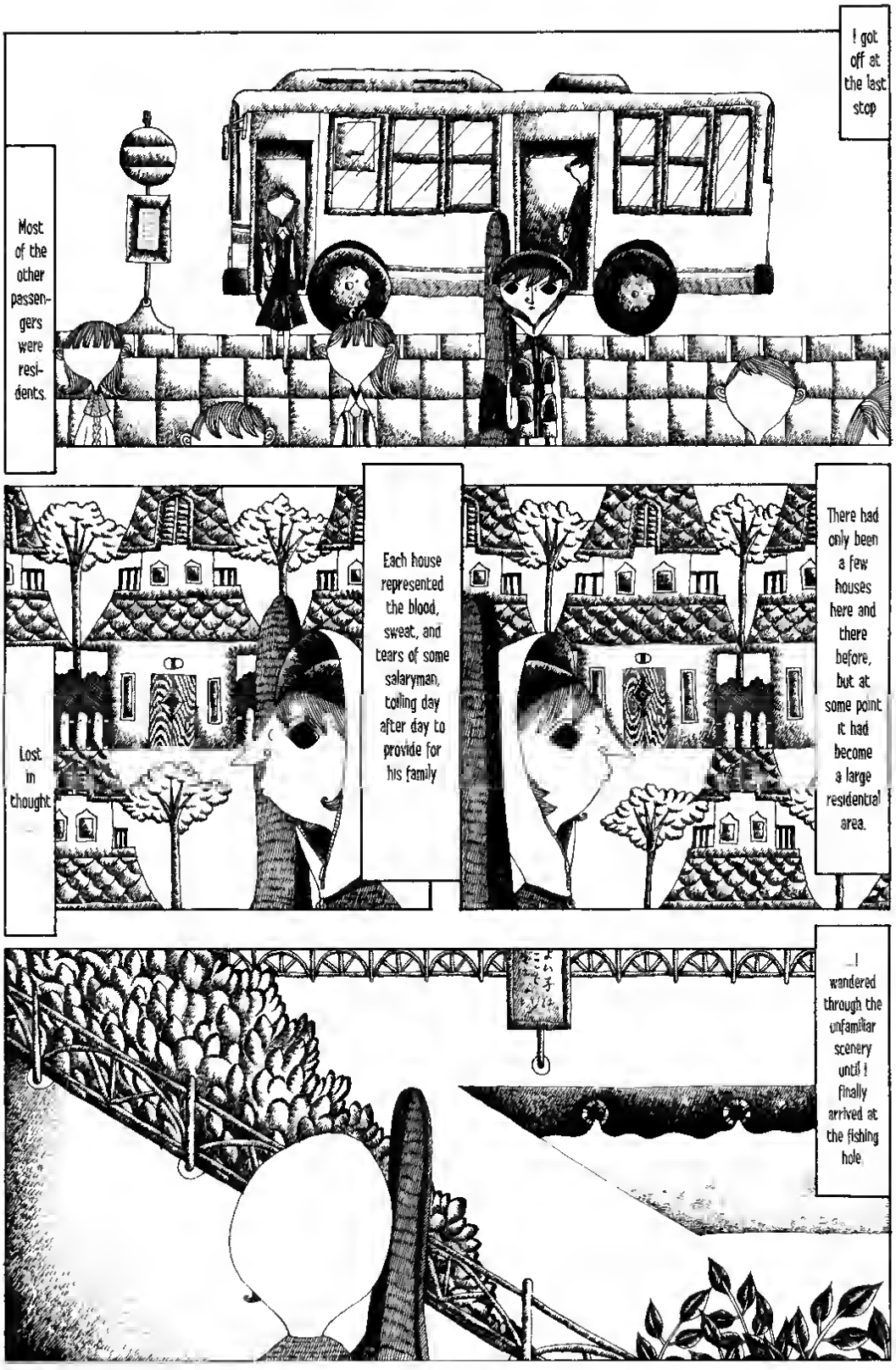
*A low table with a heat source (usually electric) underneath covered with a quilt to retain the heat, used for keeping warm in the winter

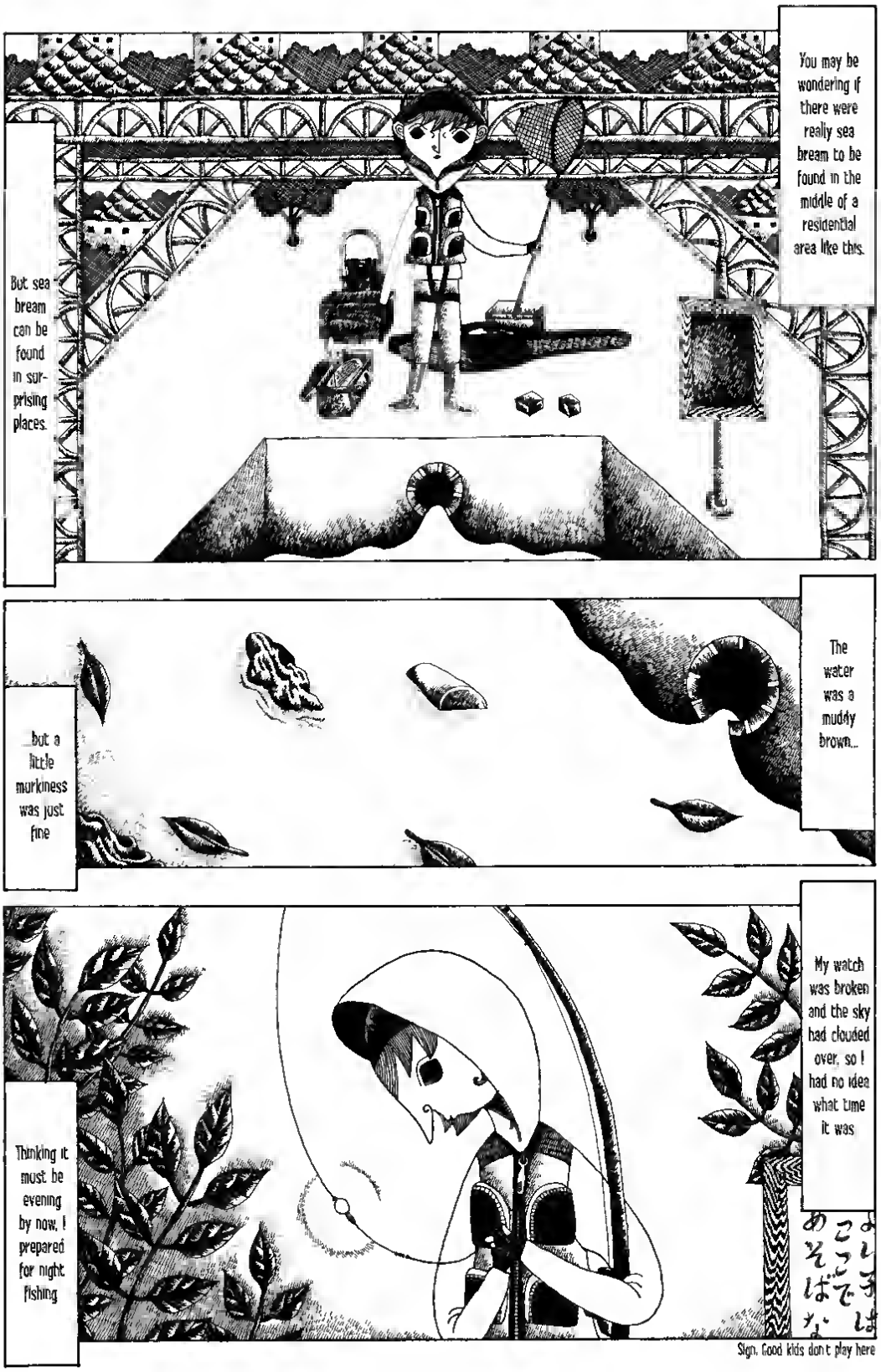

I suddenly felt like I'd been quite rude
I wished I had stayed at T-san's, tucked under the *kotatsu** and drinking sake. He always listened to me gripe about work, so it wouldn't have done me any harm to listen to his complaints for once

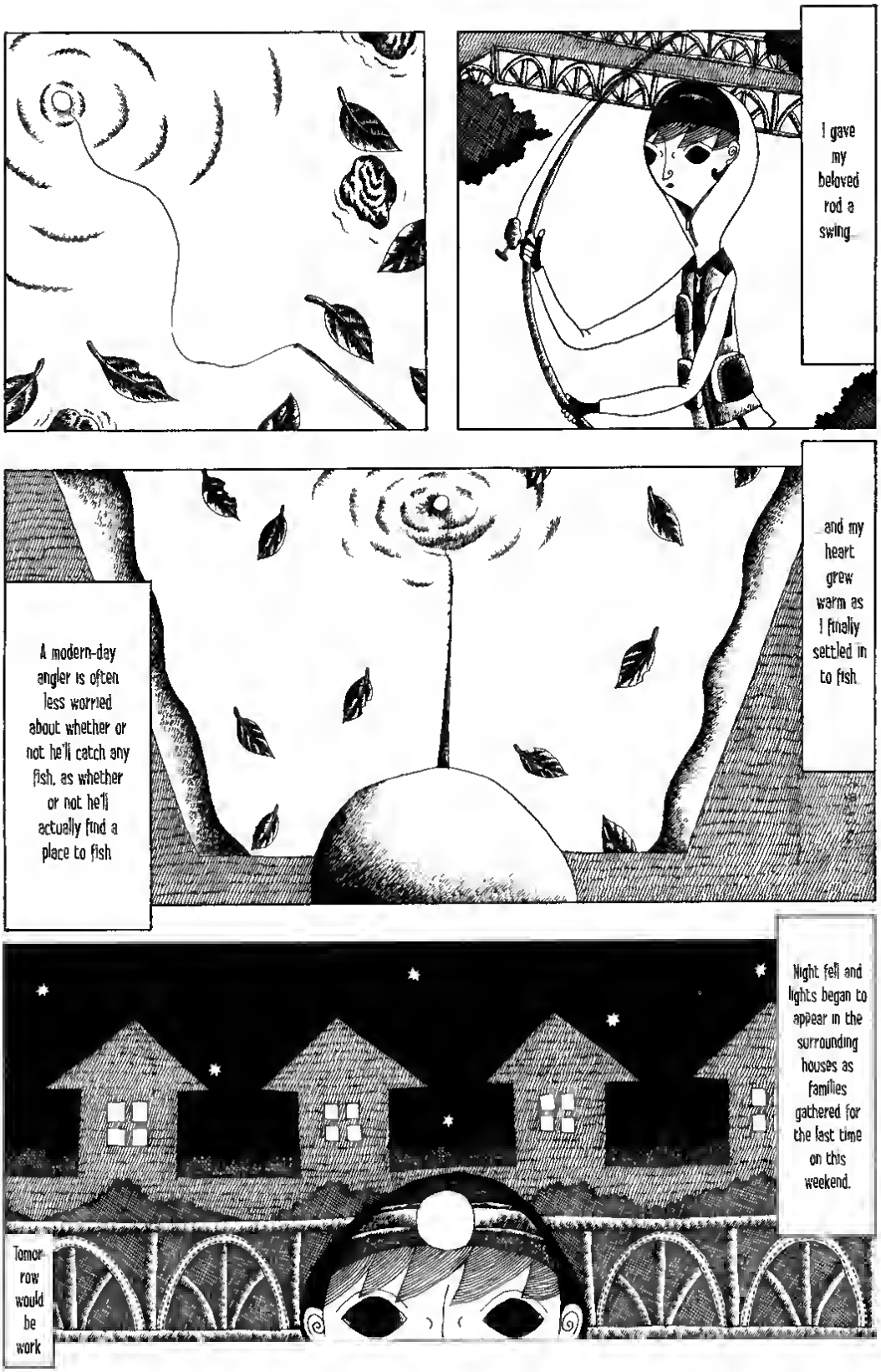


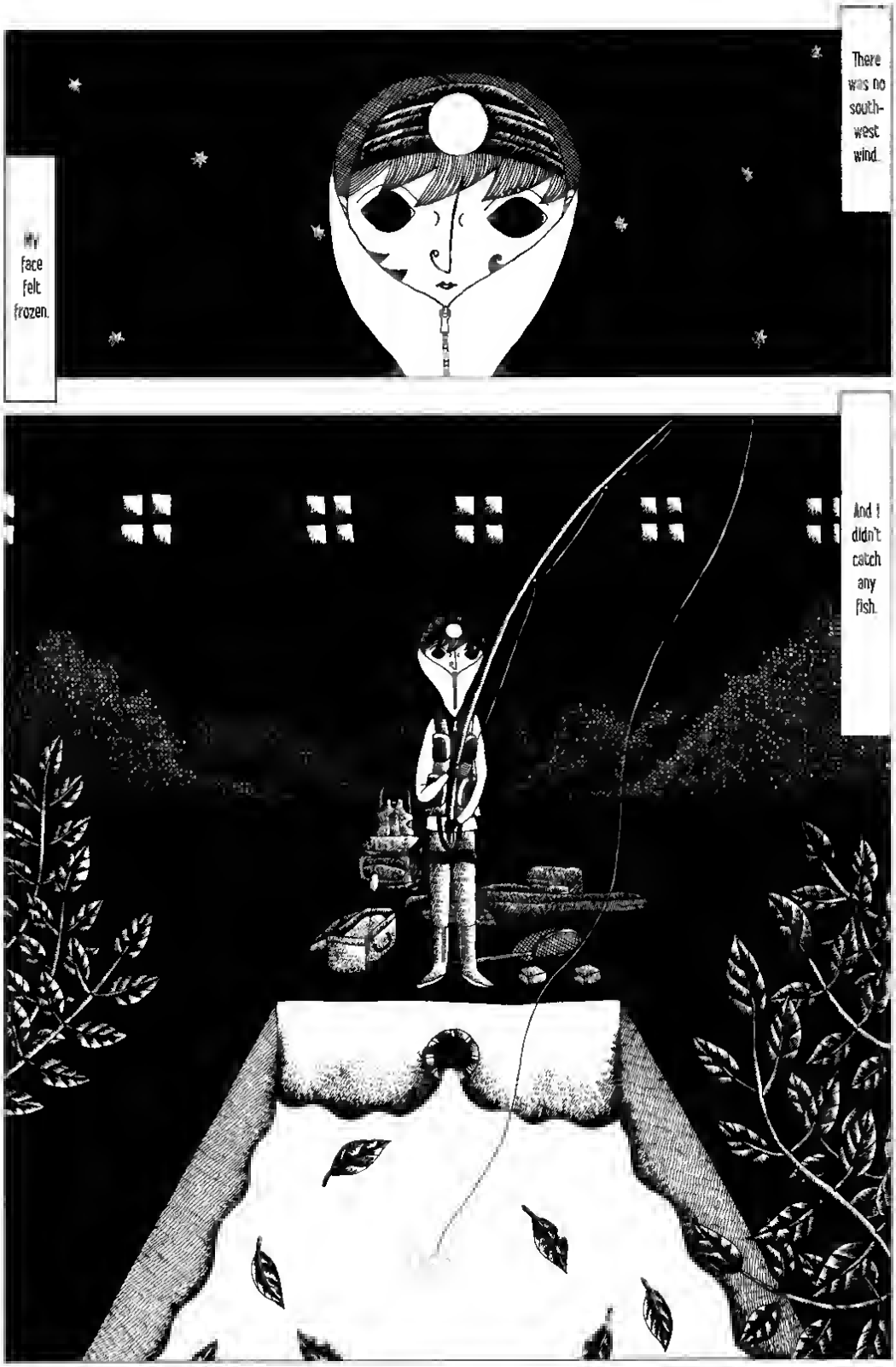

I'd heard about it many times from the bait shop I frequented, and I was pretty sure that was where I'd first gone fishing with T-san
I remembered that there was a little-known spot for sea bream fishing in XX Heights.


The bus was full of shoppers and students done with their club activities for the day
Feeling like this was a happy coincidence, I hopped on the bus.
The cold north wind felt good.
Feeling hot, I opened the window
But the schoolgirl behind me looked annoyed so I closed the window
The bus made its way up the wide, hilly road


I got off at the last stop
Most of the other passengers were residents.
Each house represented the blood, sweat, and tears of some salaryman, toiling day after day to provide for his family
There had only been a few houses here and there before, but at some point it had become a large residential area.
Lost in thought...
...I wandered through the unfamiliar scenery until I finally arrived at the fishing hole.

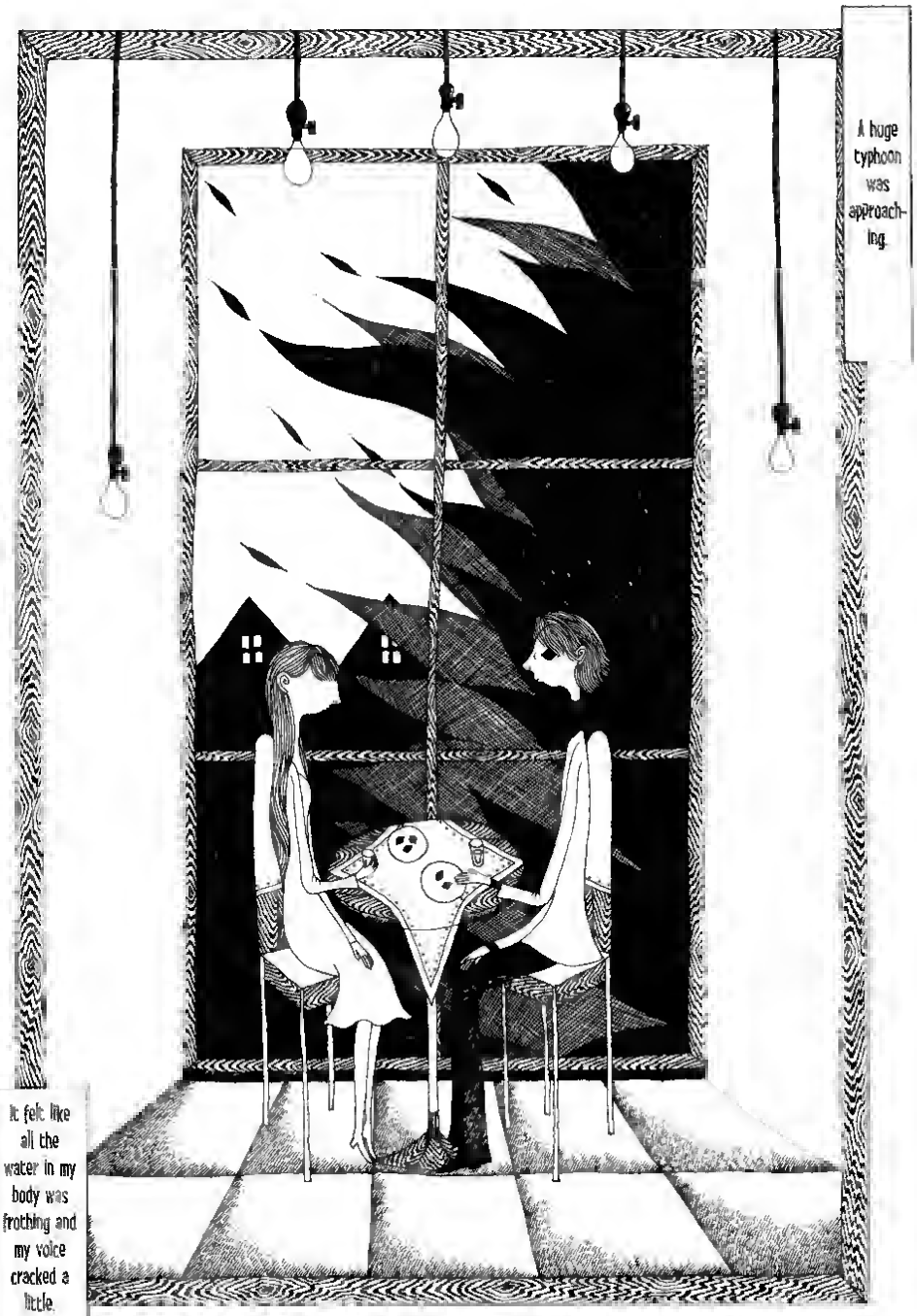

You may be wondering if there were really sea bream to be found in the middle of a residential area like this.
But sea bream can be found in surprising places.
The water was a muddy brown...
...but a little murkiness was just fine
My watch was broken and the sky had clouded over, so I had no idea what time it was.
Thinking it must be evening by now, I prepared for night fishing.
よい子はここであそばないでね
Sign. Good kids don't play here

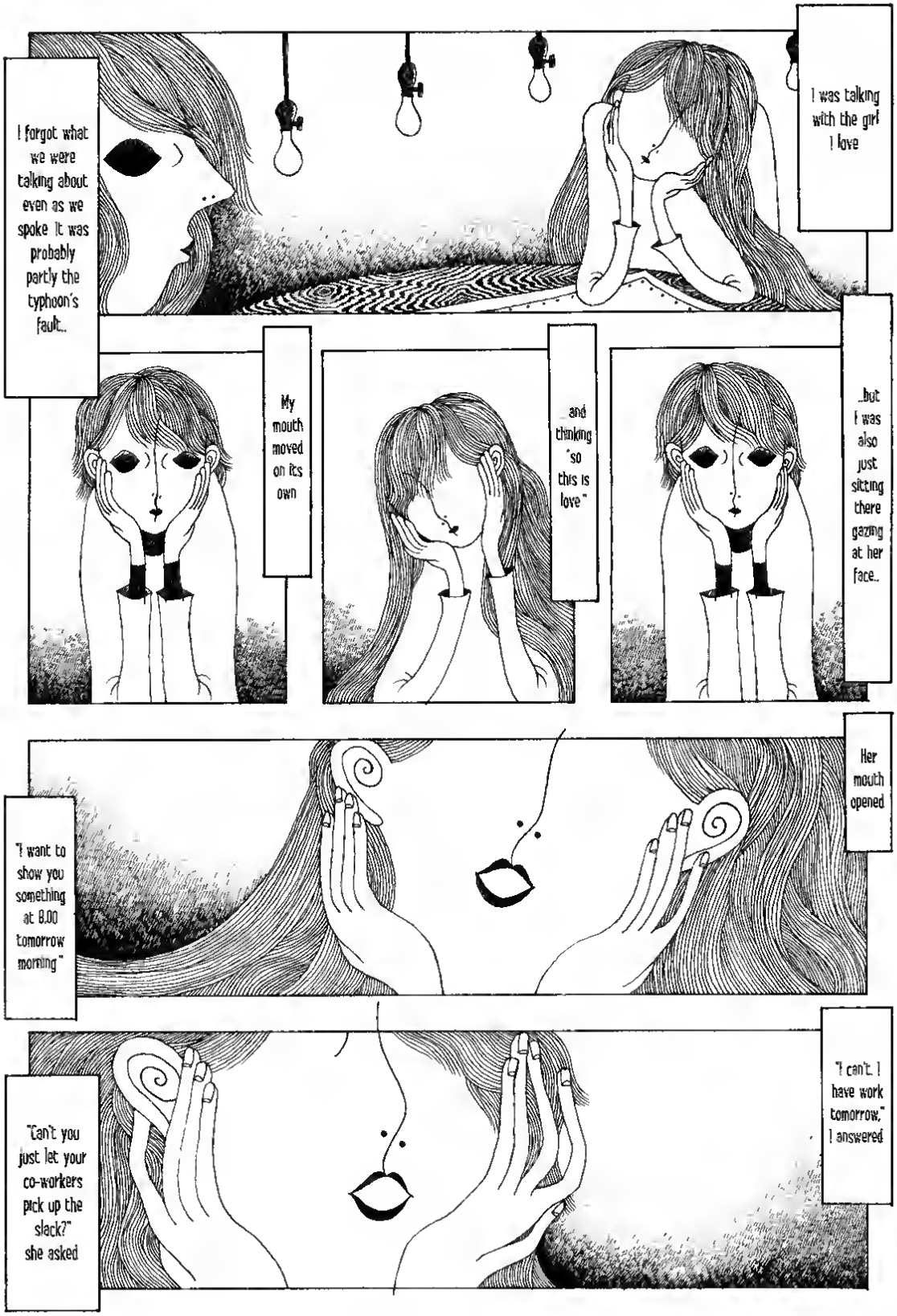

I gave my beloved rod a swing
and my heart grew warm as I finally settled in to fish
A modern-day angler is often less worried about whether or not he'll catch any fish, as whether or not he'll actually find a place to fish
Night fell and lights began to appear in the surrounding houses as families gathered for the last time on this weekend.
Tomorrow would be work

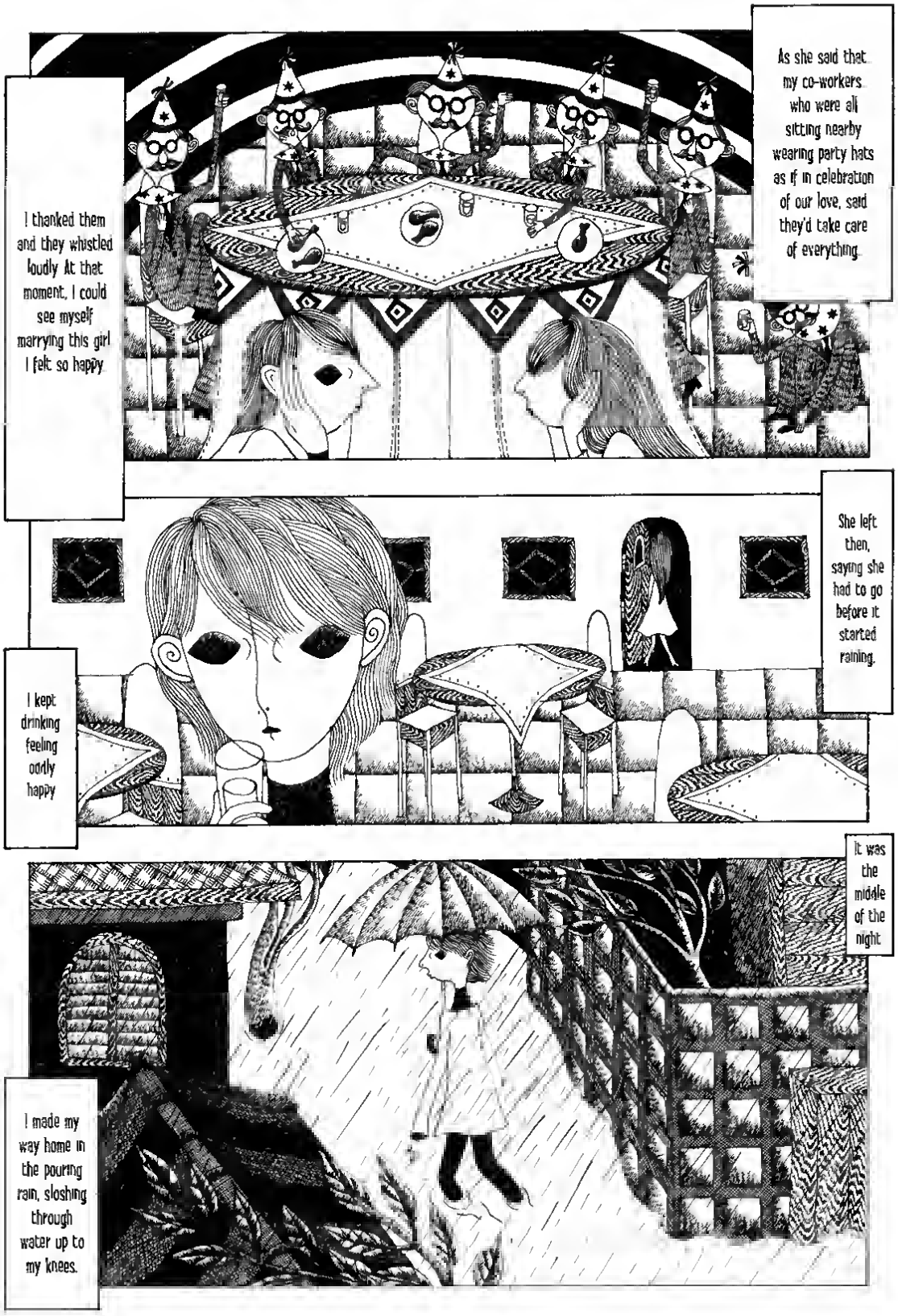

My face felt frozen.
There was no south-west wind.
And I didn't catch any fish.

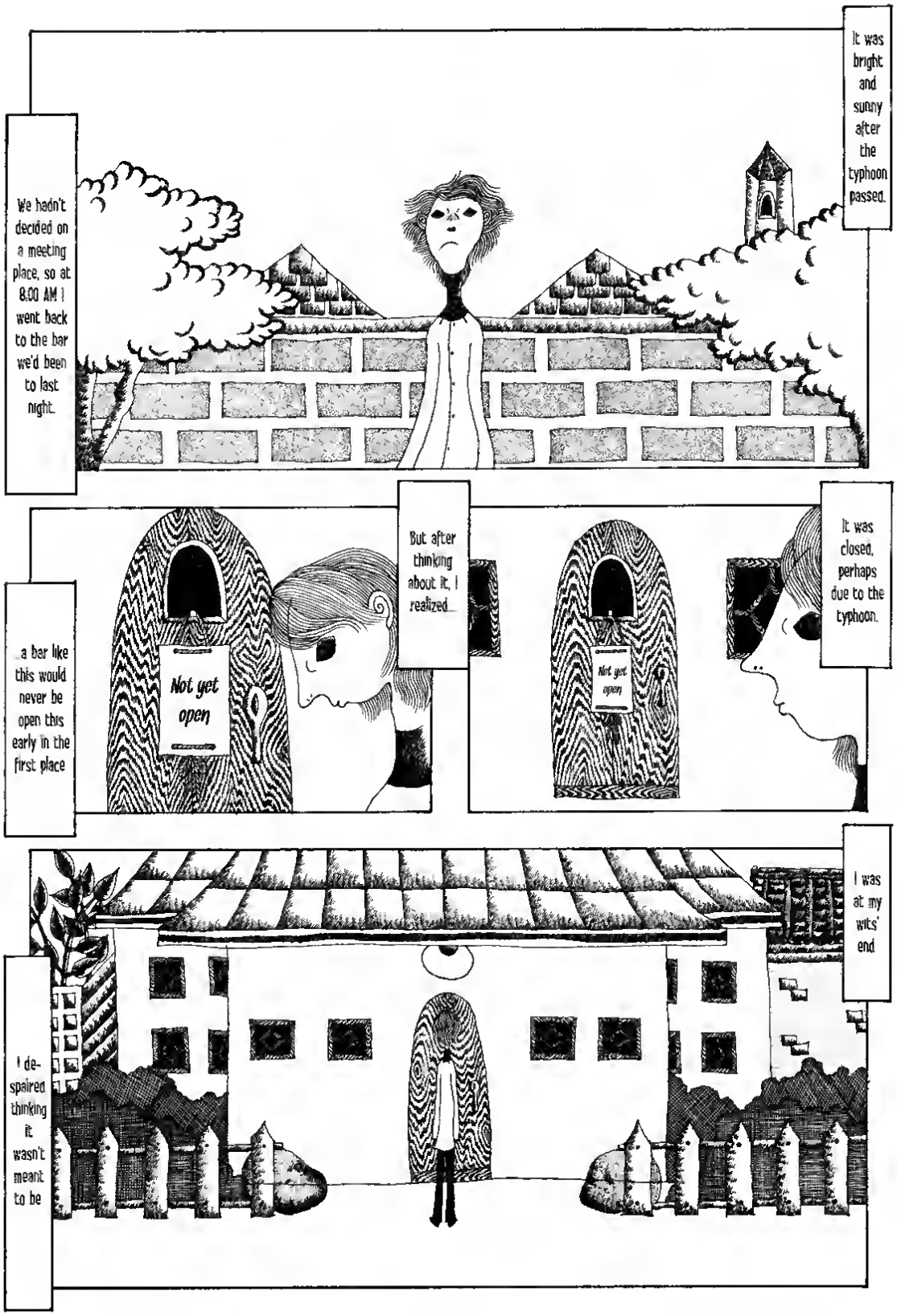
THE END

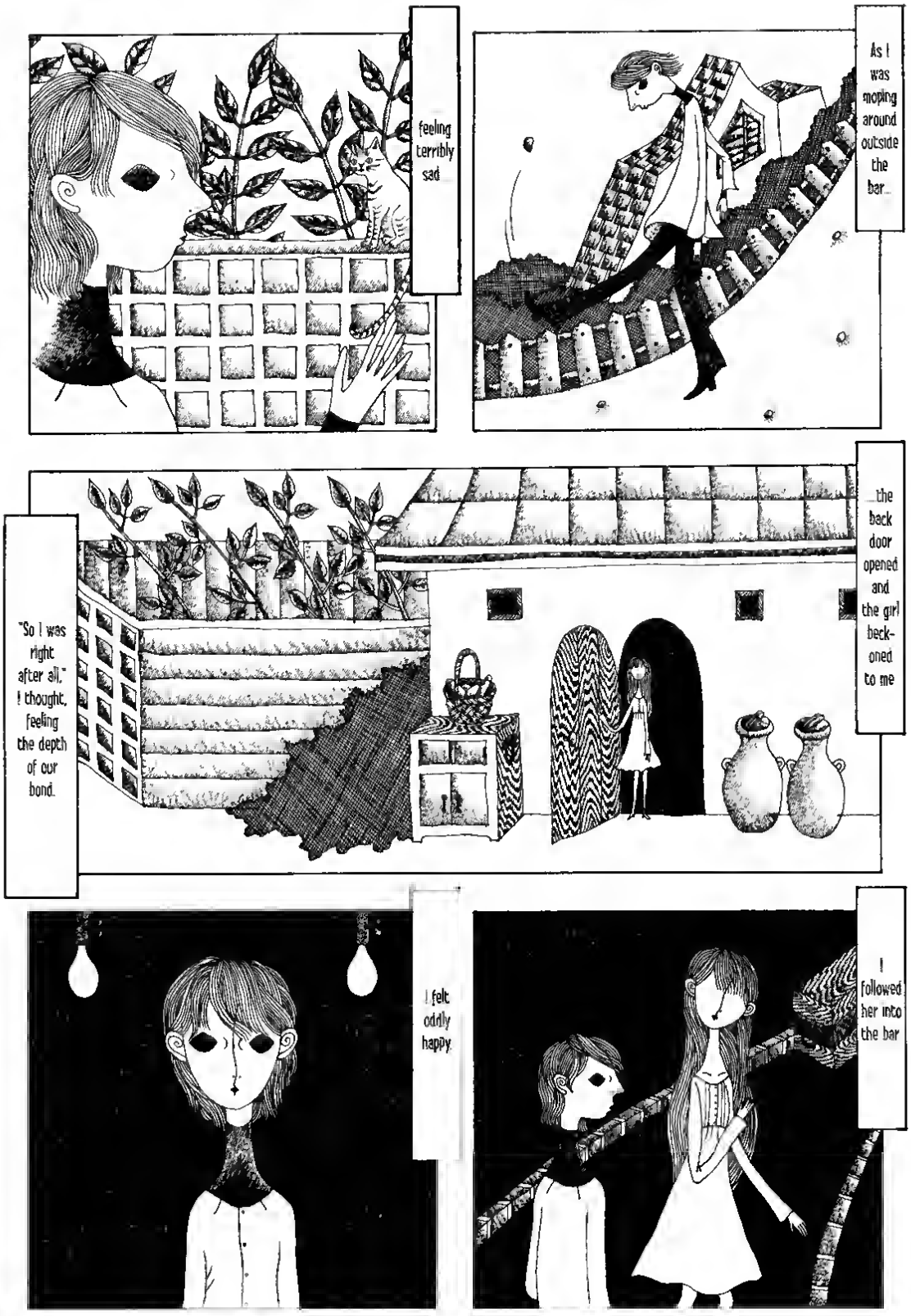
Sad Love Story

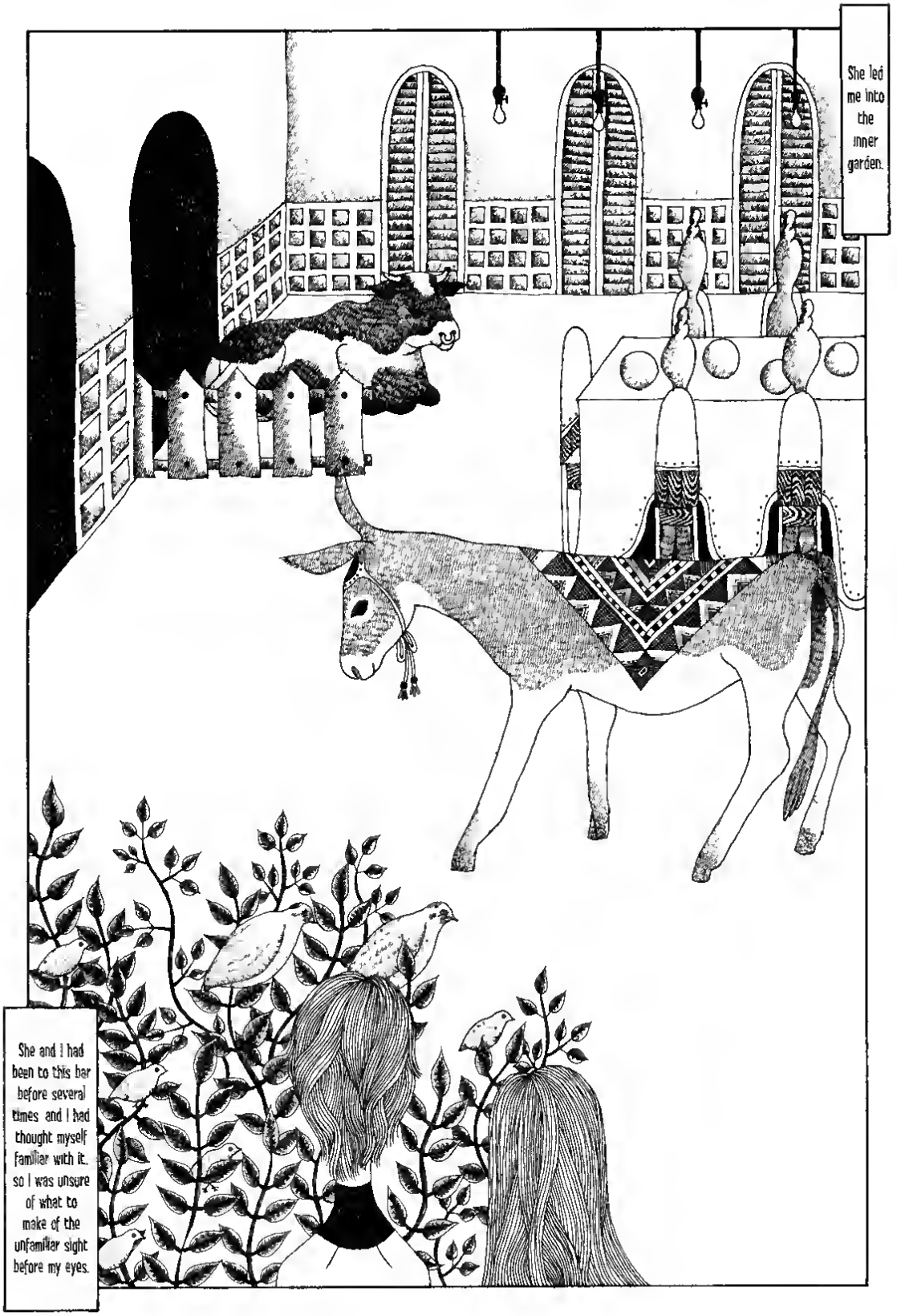


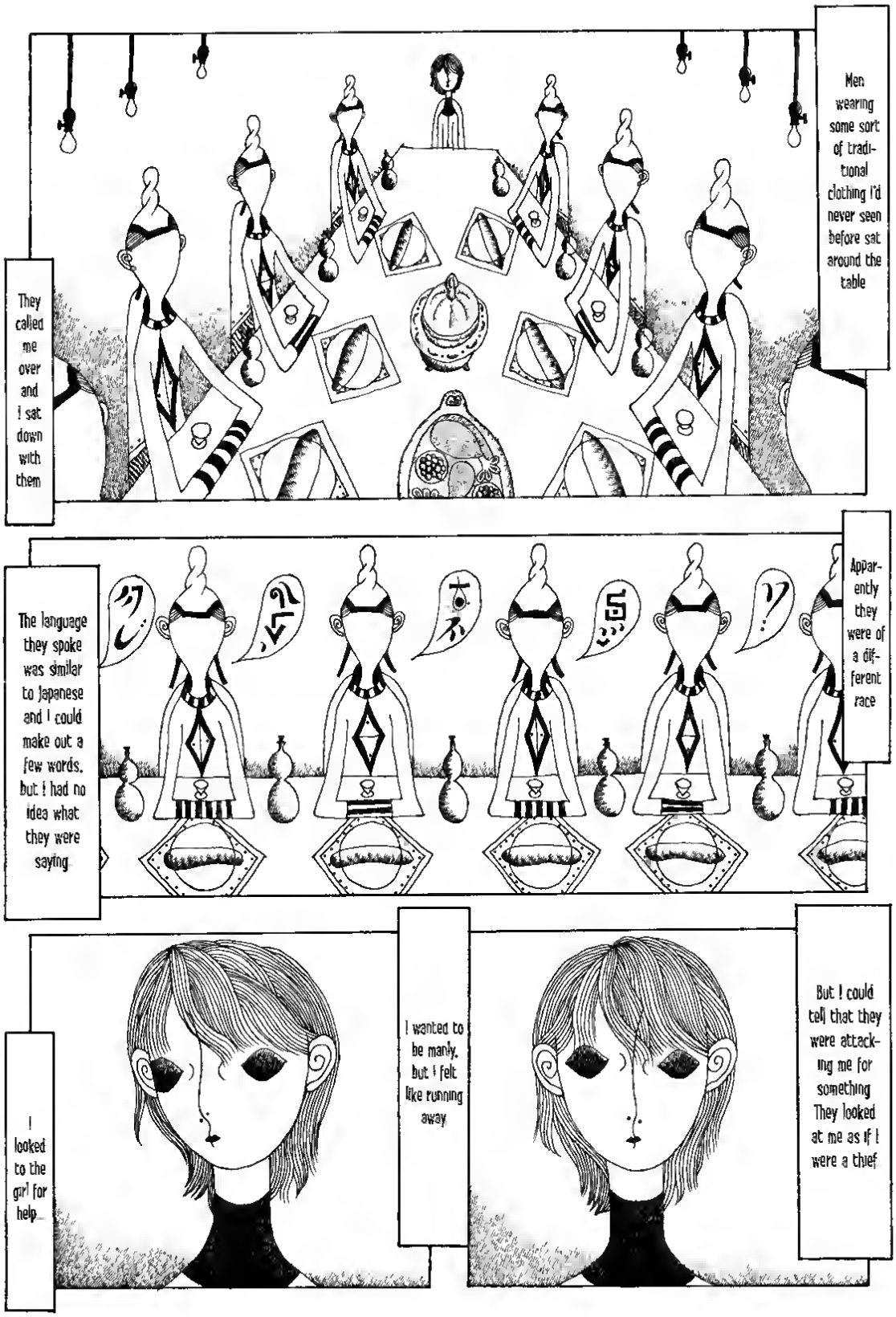

I was talking with the girl I love
I forgot what we were talking about even as we spoke It was probably partly the typhoon's fault...
My mouth moved on its own
...and thinking "so this is love"
...but I was also just sitting there gazing at her face..
Her mouth opened
"I want to show you something at 8.00 tomorrow morning"
"I can't. I have work tomorrow," I answered
"Can't you just let your co-workers pick up the slack?" she asked

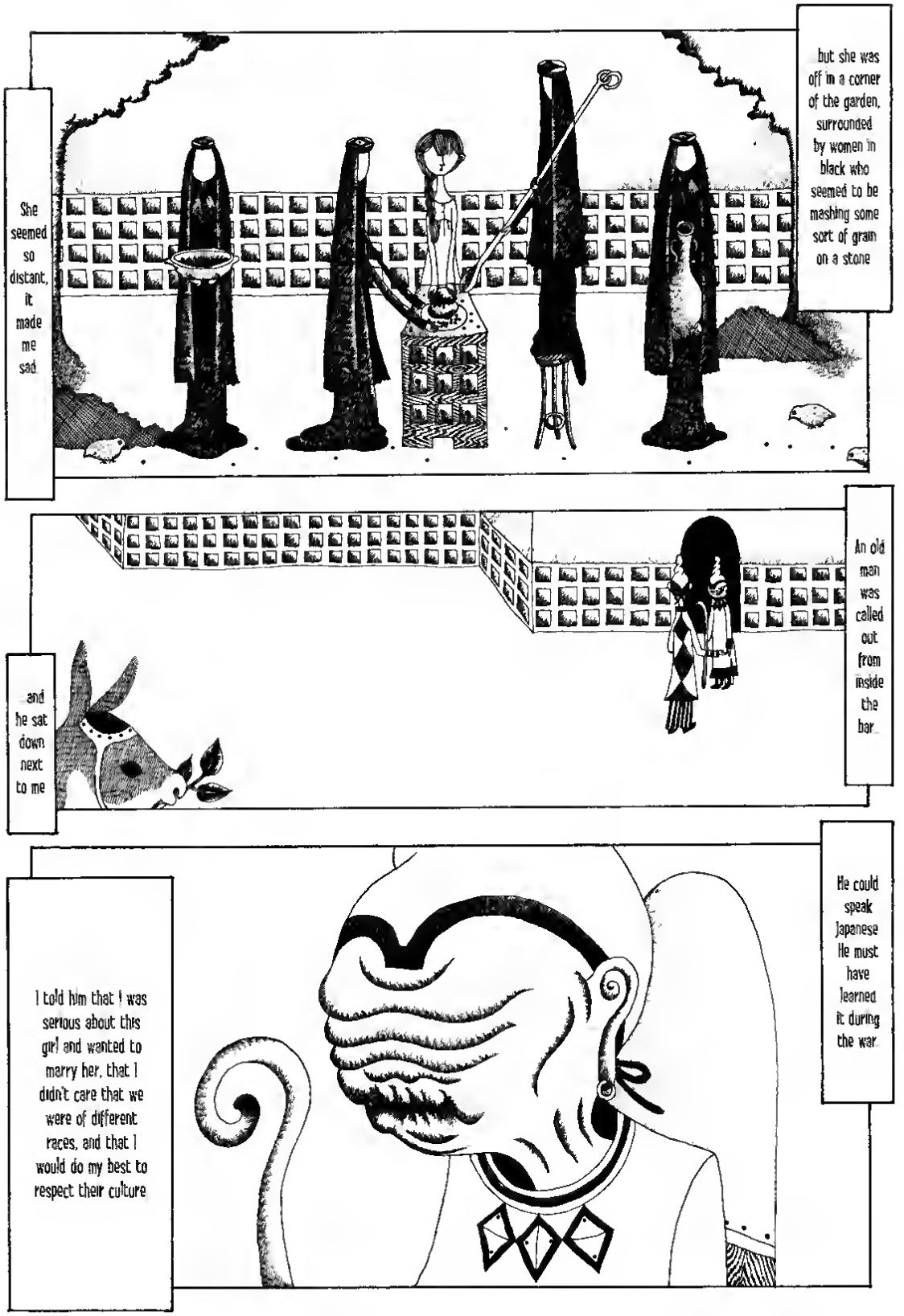

I thanked them and they whistled loudly At that moment, I could see myself marrying this girl I felt so happy
As she said that my co-workers who were all sitting nearby wearing party hats as if in celebration of our love, said they'd take care of everything
I kept drinking feeling oddly happy
She left then, saying she had to go before it started raining
I made my way home in the pouring rain, sloshing through water up to my knees.
It was the middle of the night

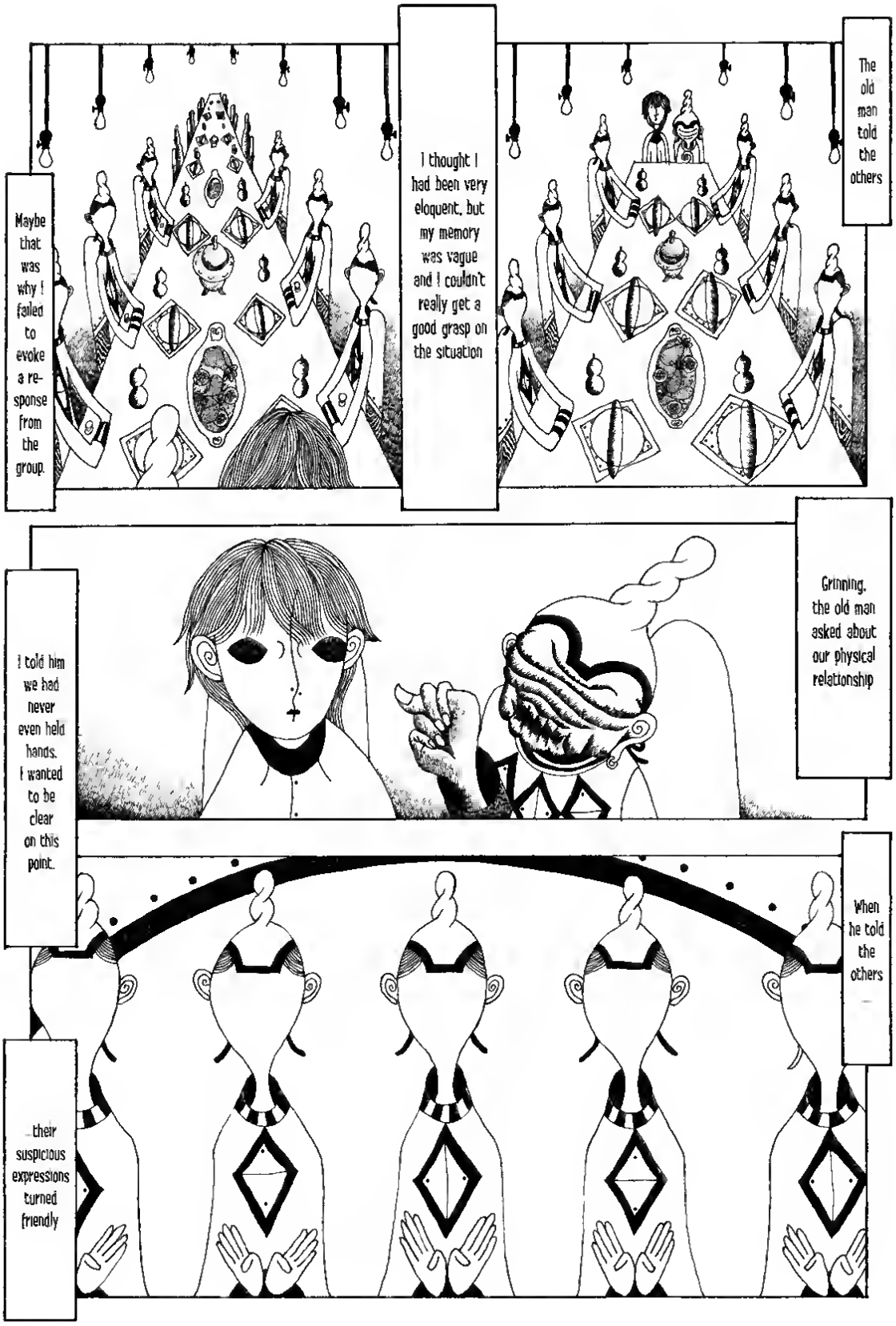

We hadn't decided on a meeting place, so at 8:00 AM I went back to the bar we'd been to last night.
It was bright and sunny after the typhoon passed.
...a bar like this would never be open this early in the first place
Not yet open
But after thinking about it, I realized...
Not yet open
It was closed, perhaps due to the typhoon.
I de-spaired thinking it wasn't meant to be
I was at my wits' end

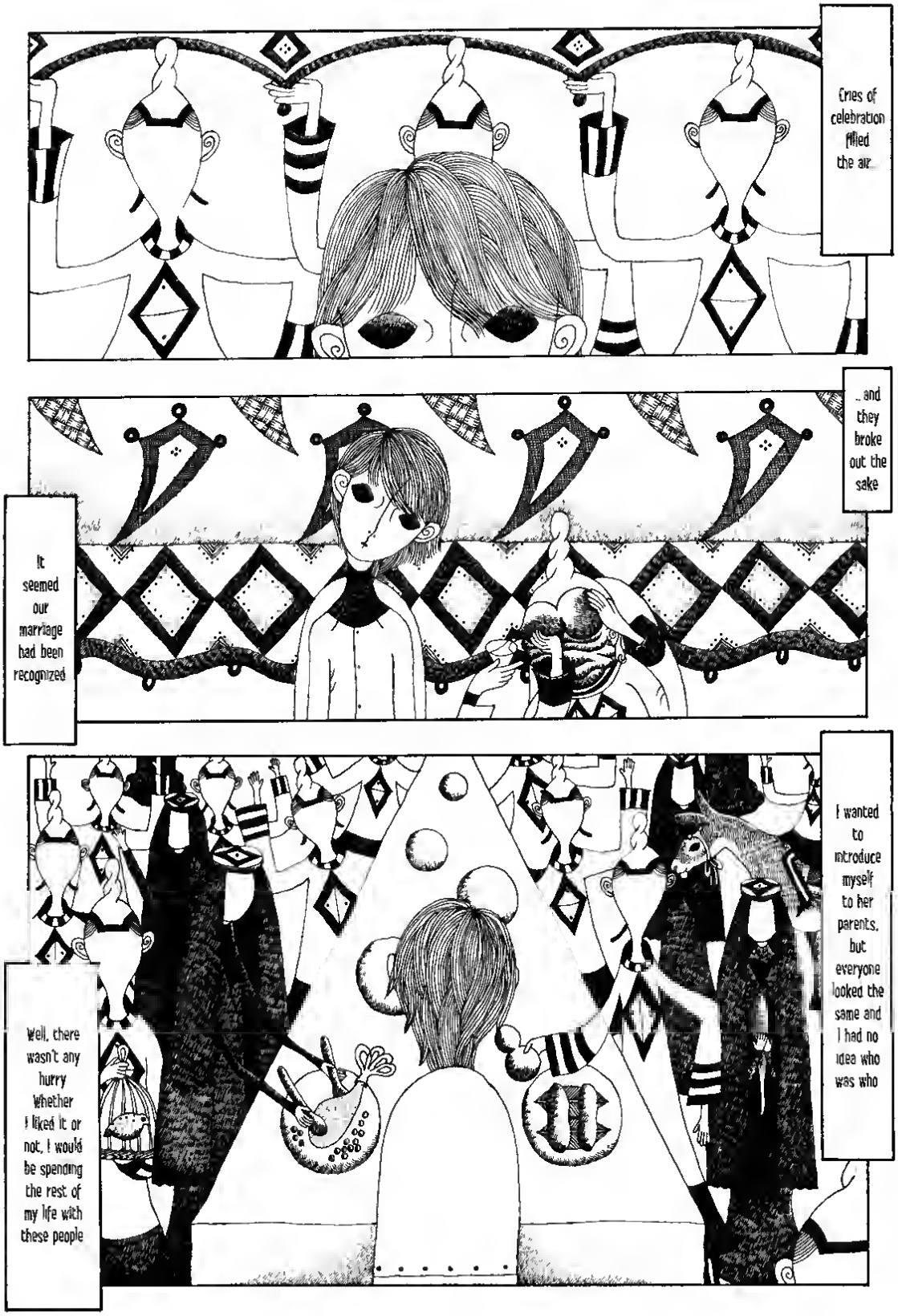

feeling terribly sad
As I was moping around outside the bar...
...the back door opened and the girl beckoned to me
"So I was right after all," I thought, feeling the depth of our bond.
I felt oddly happy.
I followed her into the bar

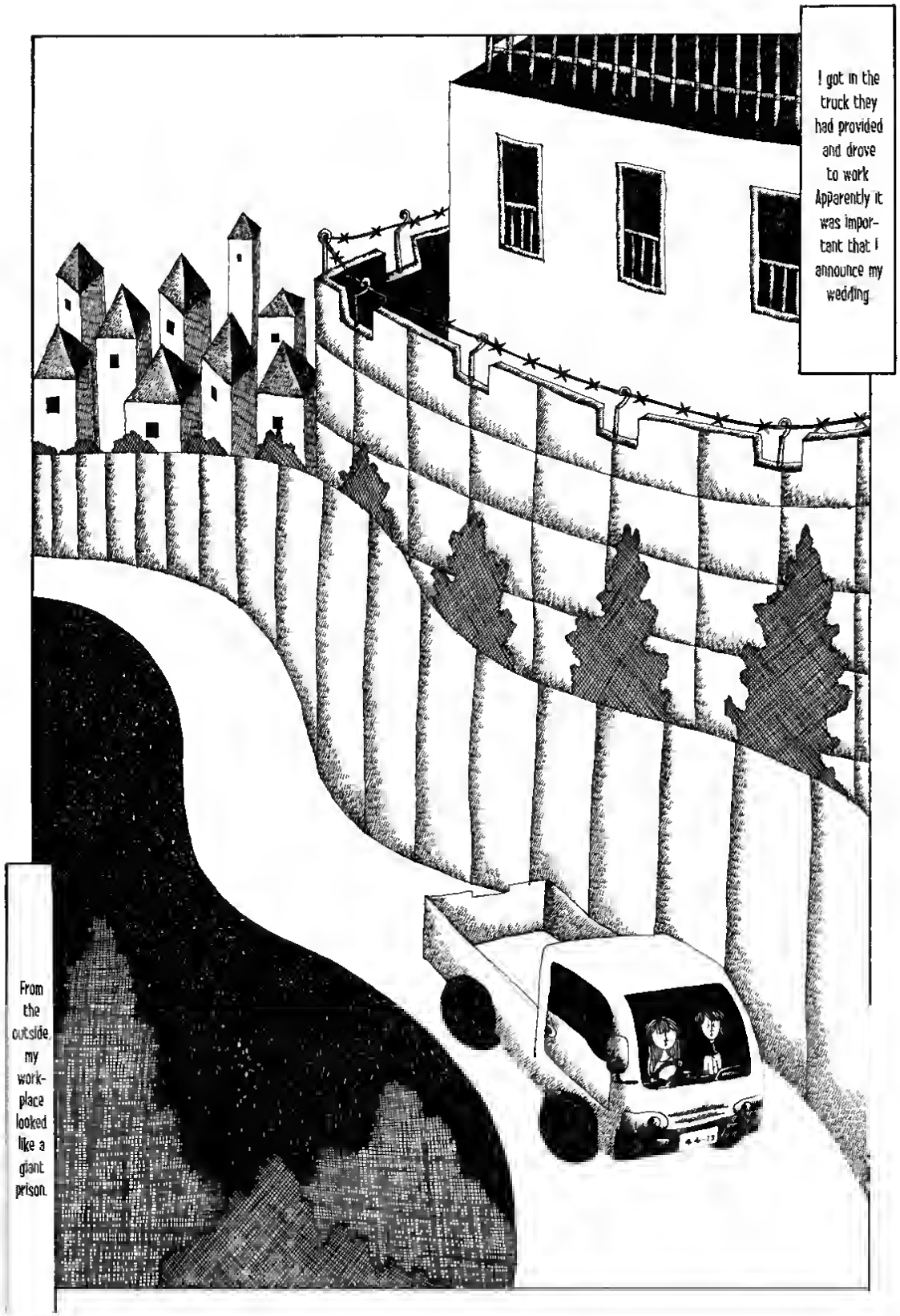

She led me into the inner garden.
She and I had been to this bar before several times and I had thought myself familiar with it, so I was unsure of what to make of the unfamiliar sight before my eyes.

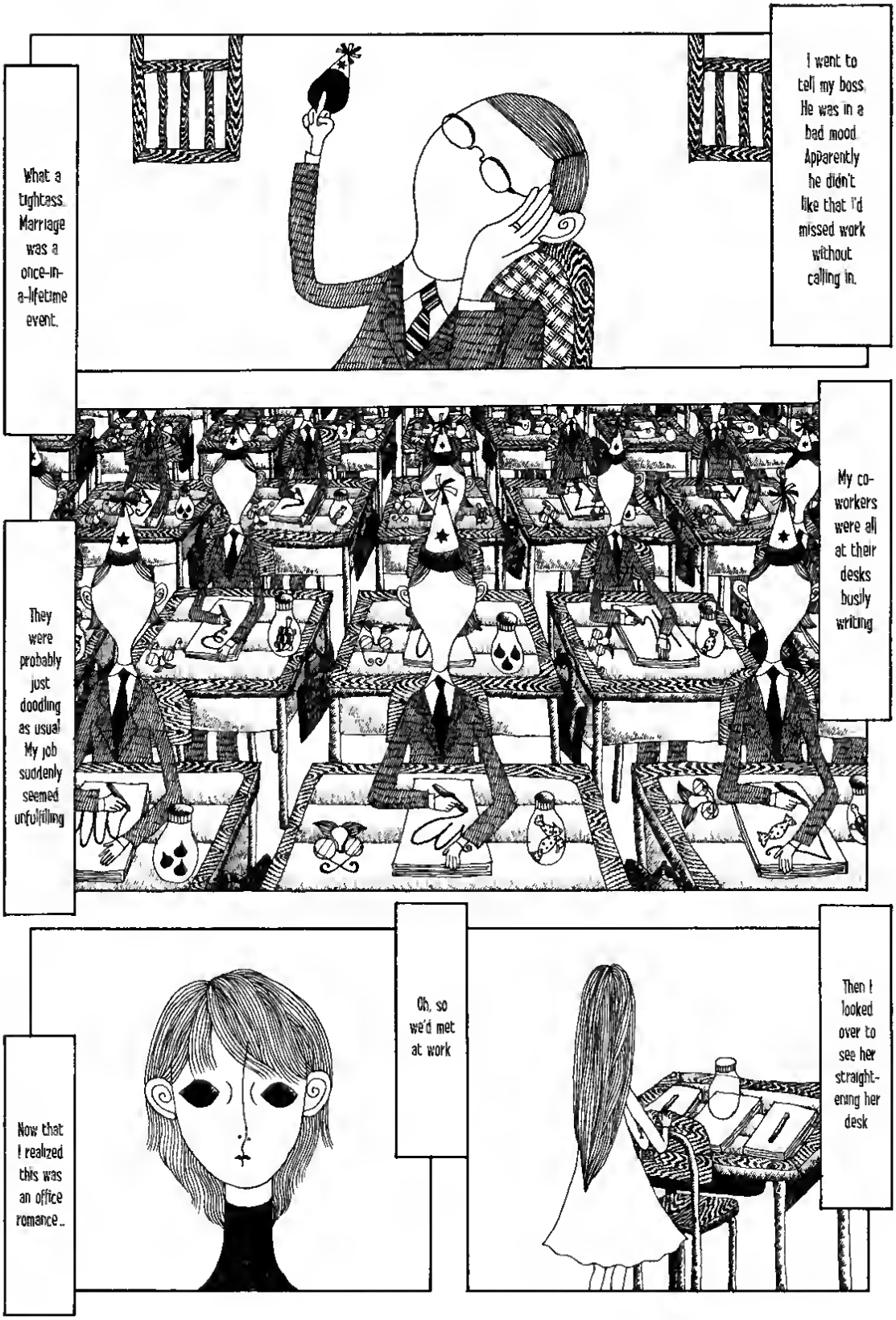

Men wearing some sort of traditional clothing I'd never seen before sat around the table
They called me over and I sat down with them
Apparently they were of a different race
The language they spoke was similar to Japanese and I could make out a few words, but I had no idea what they were saying
But I could tell that they were attacking me for something They looked at me as if I were a thief
I wanted to be manly, but I felt like running away
I looked to the girl for help

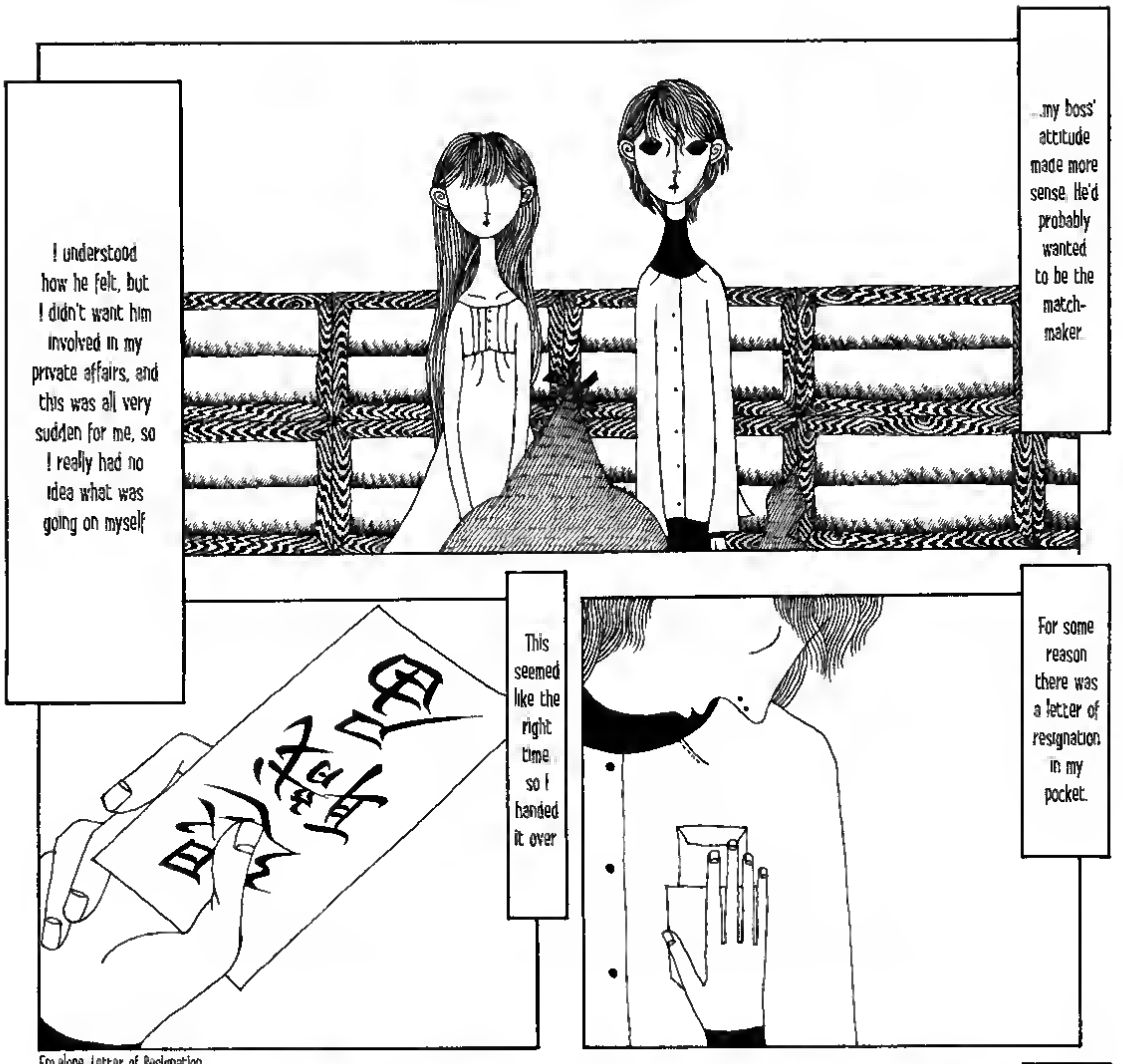

She seemed so distant, it made me sad
but she was off in a corner of the garden, surrounded by women in black who seemed to be mashing some sort of grain on a stone
and he sat down next to me
An old man was called out from inside the bar
I told him that I was serious about this girl and wanted to marry her, that I didn't care that we were of different races, and that I would do my best to respect their culture
He could speak Japanese He must have learned it during the war

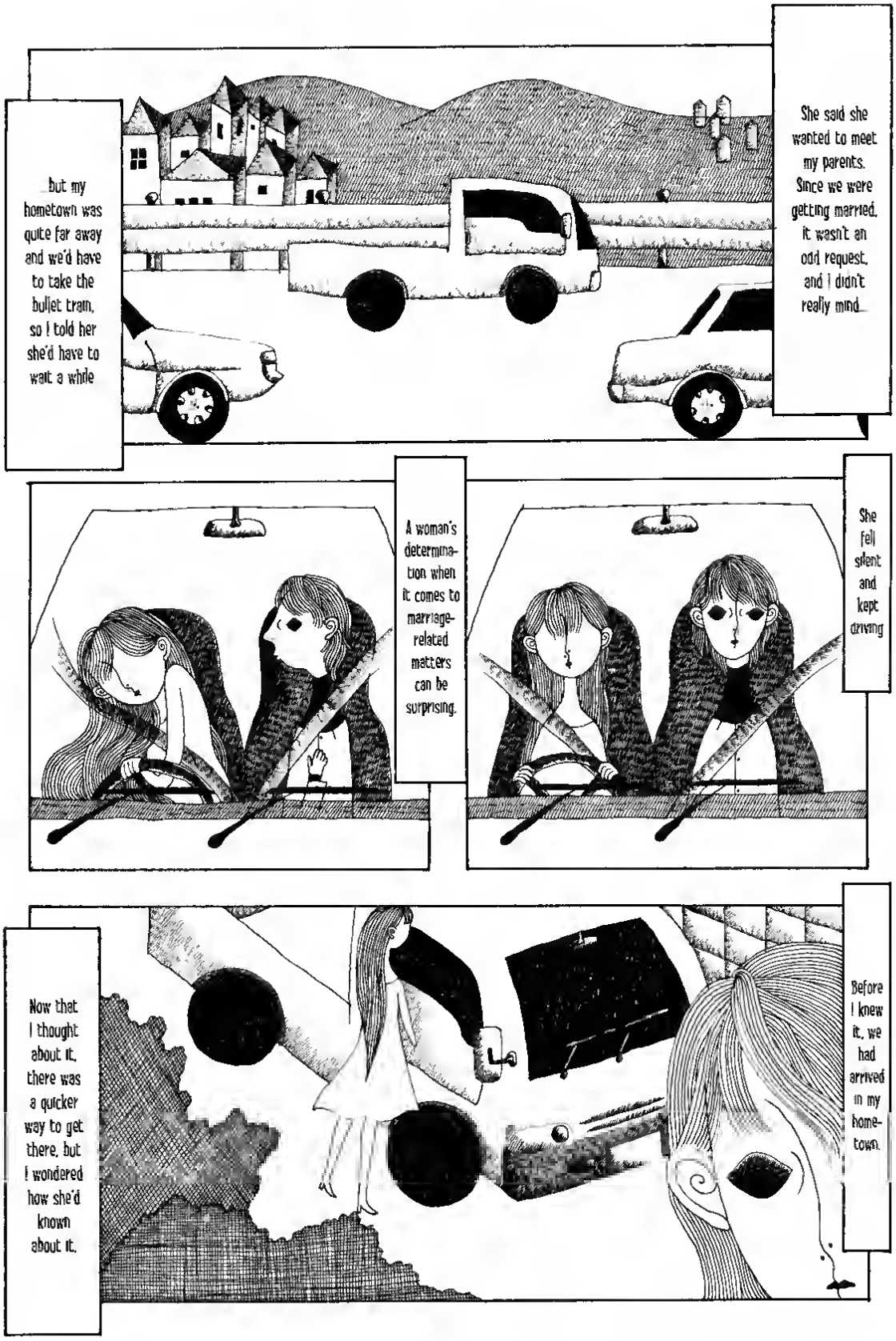

Maybe that was why I failed to evoke a response from the group.
I thought I had been very eloquent, but my memory was vague and I couldn't really get a good grasp on the situation
The old man told the others
I told him we had never even held hands. I wanted to be clear on this point.
Grinning, the old man asked about our physical relationship
...their suspicious expressions turned friendly
When he told the others ...


Cries of celebration filled the air...
...and they broke out the sake
It seemed our marriage had been recognized
I wanted to introduce myself to her parents, but everyone looked the same and I had no idea who was who
Well, there wasn't any hurry Whether I liked it or not, I would be spending the rest of my life with these people

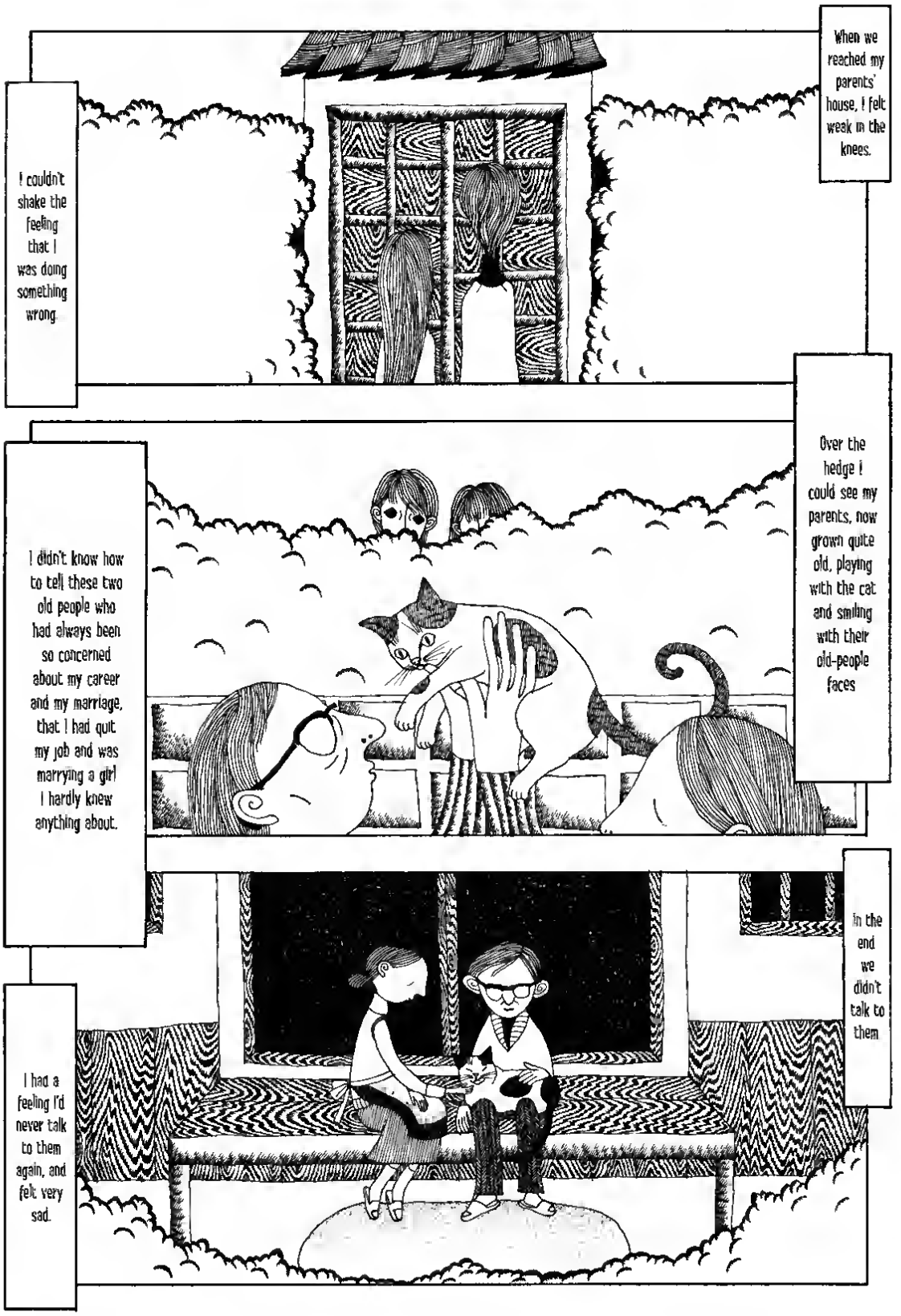

I got in the truck they had provided and drove to work. Apparently it was important that I announce my wedding.
From the outside, my workplace looked like a giant prison.

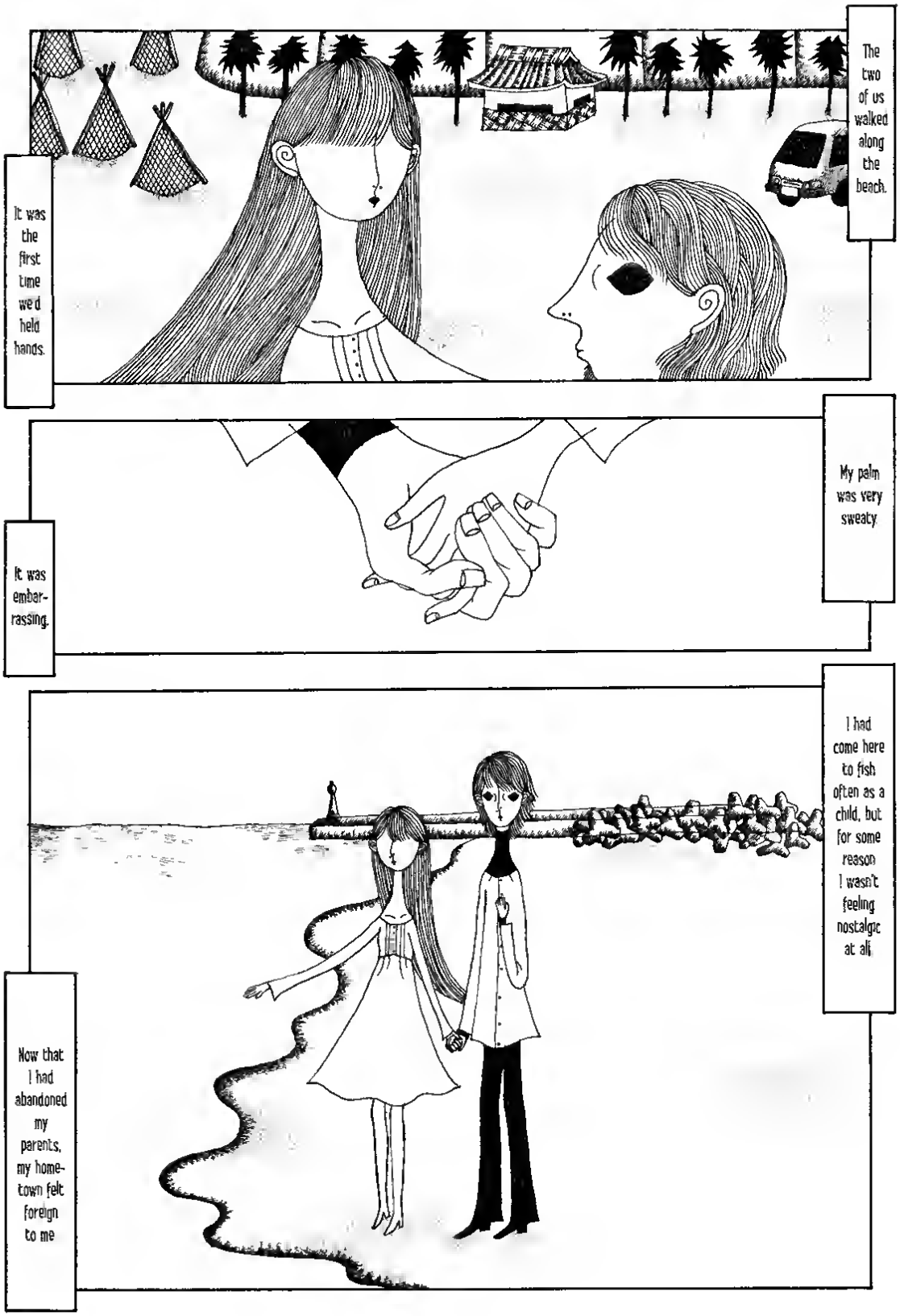

What a tightass. Marriage was a once-in-a-lifetime event.
I went to tell my boss. He was in a bad mood. Apparently he didn't like that I'd missed work without calling in.
They were probably just doodling as usual. My job suddenly seemed unfulfilling.
My co-workers were all at their desks busily writing.
Now that I realized this was an office romance...
Oh, so we'd met at work.
Then I looked over to see her straightening her desk.

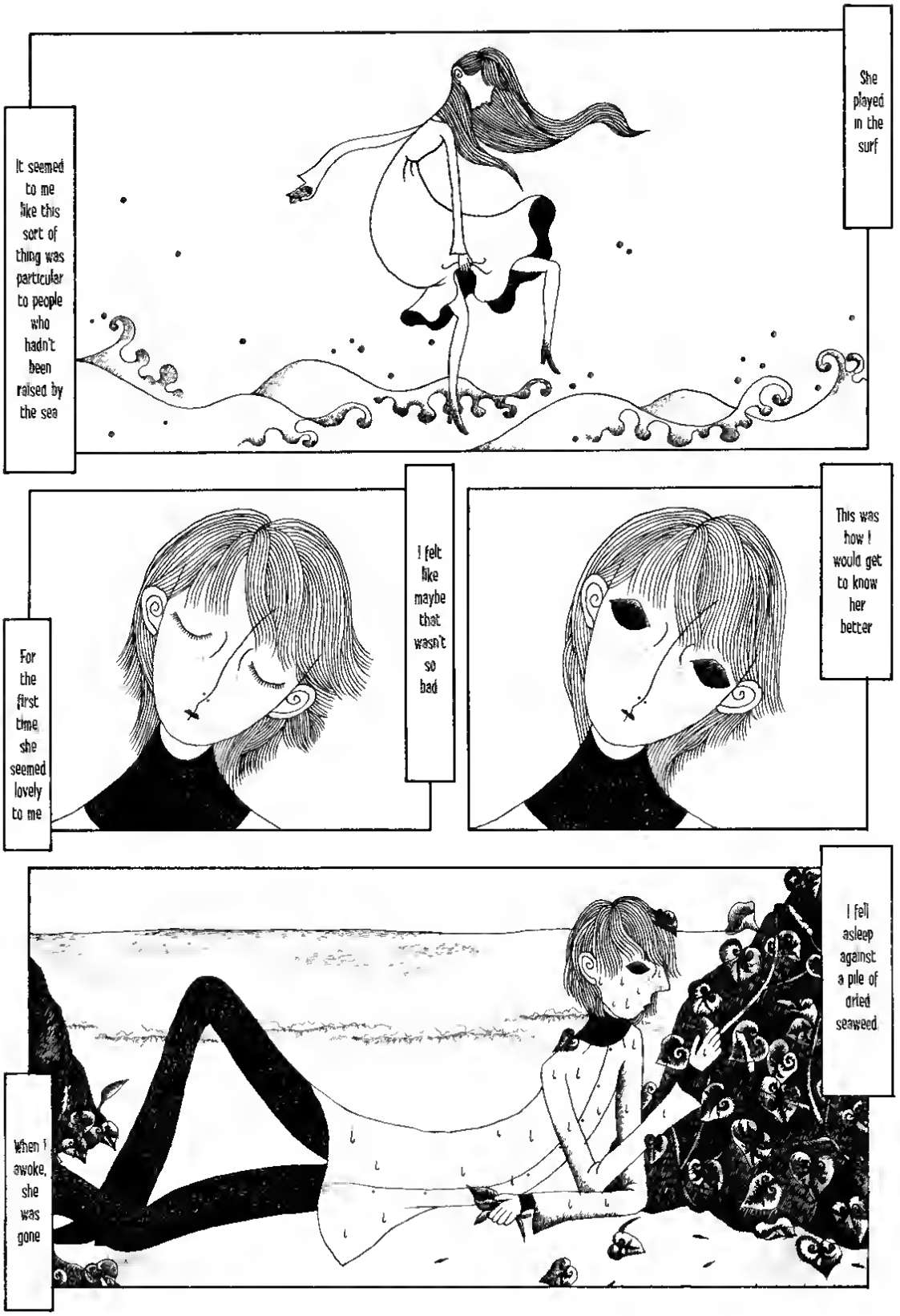

...my boss' attitude made more sense. He'd probably wanted to be the match-maker.
I understood how he felt, but I didn't want him involved in my private affairs, and this was all very sudden for me, so I really had no idea what was going on myself
For some reason there was a letter of resignation in my pocket.
This seemed like the right time, so I handed it over
Envelope Letter of Resignation
My boss muttered angrily but I just felt relieved.
I knew I couldn't continue at this job if I wanted to make a life with this woman.

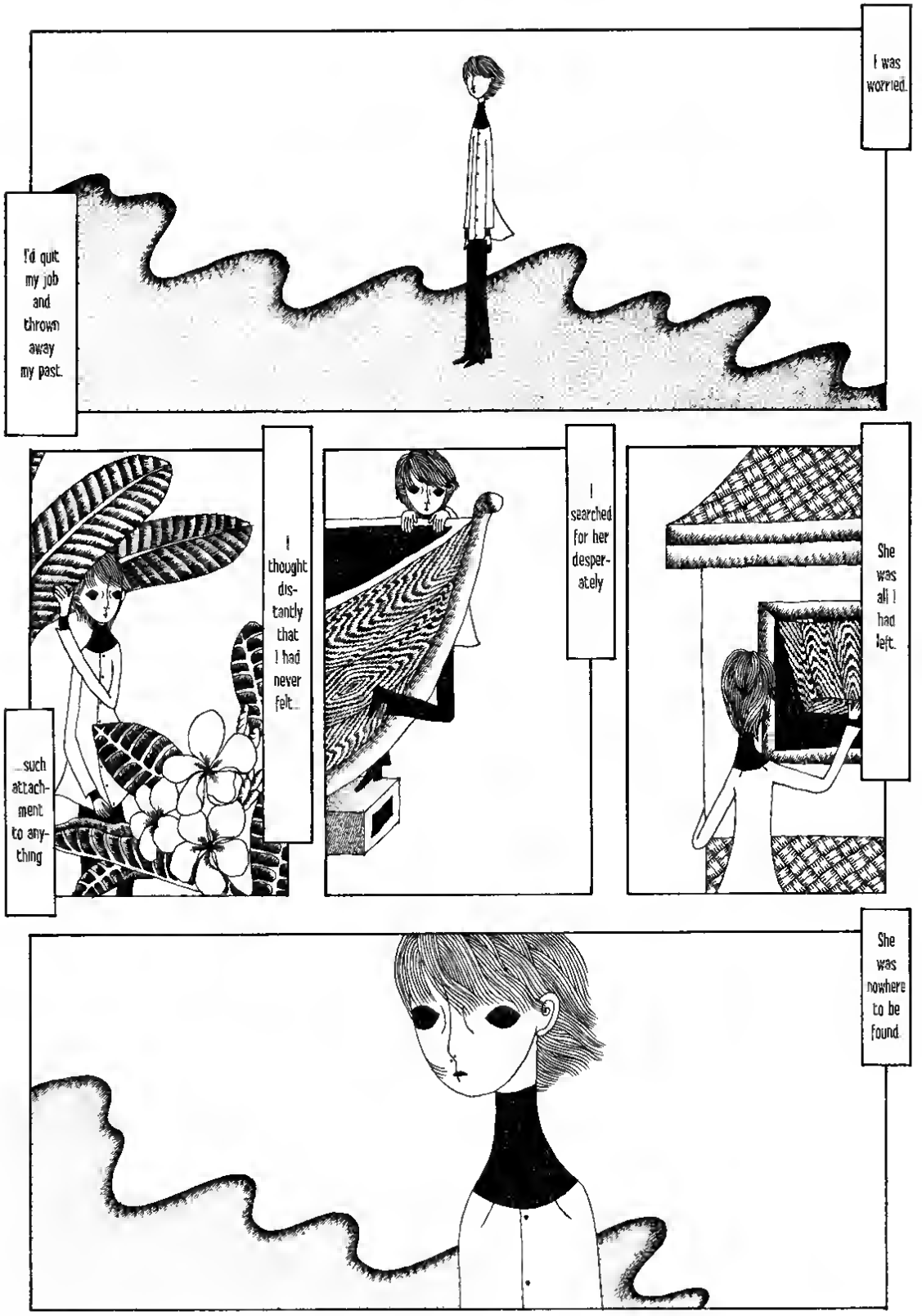

...but my hometown was quite far away and we'd have to take the bullet train, so I told her she'd have to wait a while
She said she wanted to meet my parents. Since we were getting married, it wasn't an odd request, and I didn't really mind...
A woman's determination when it comes to marriage-related matters can be surprising.
She fell silent and kept driving
Now that I thought about it, there was a quicker way to get there, but I wondered how she'd known about it.
Before I knew it, we had arrived in my hometown.

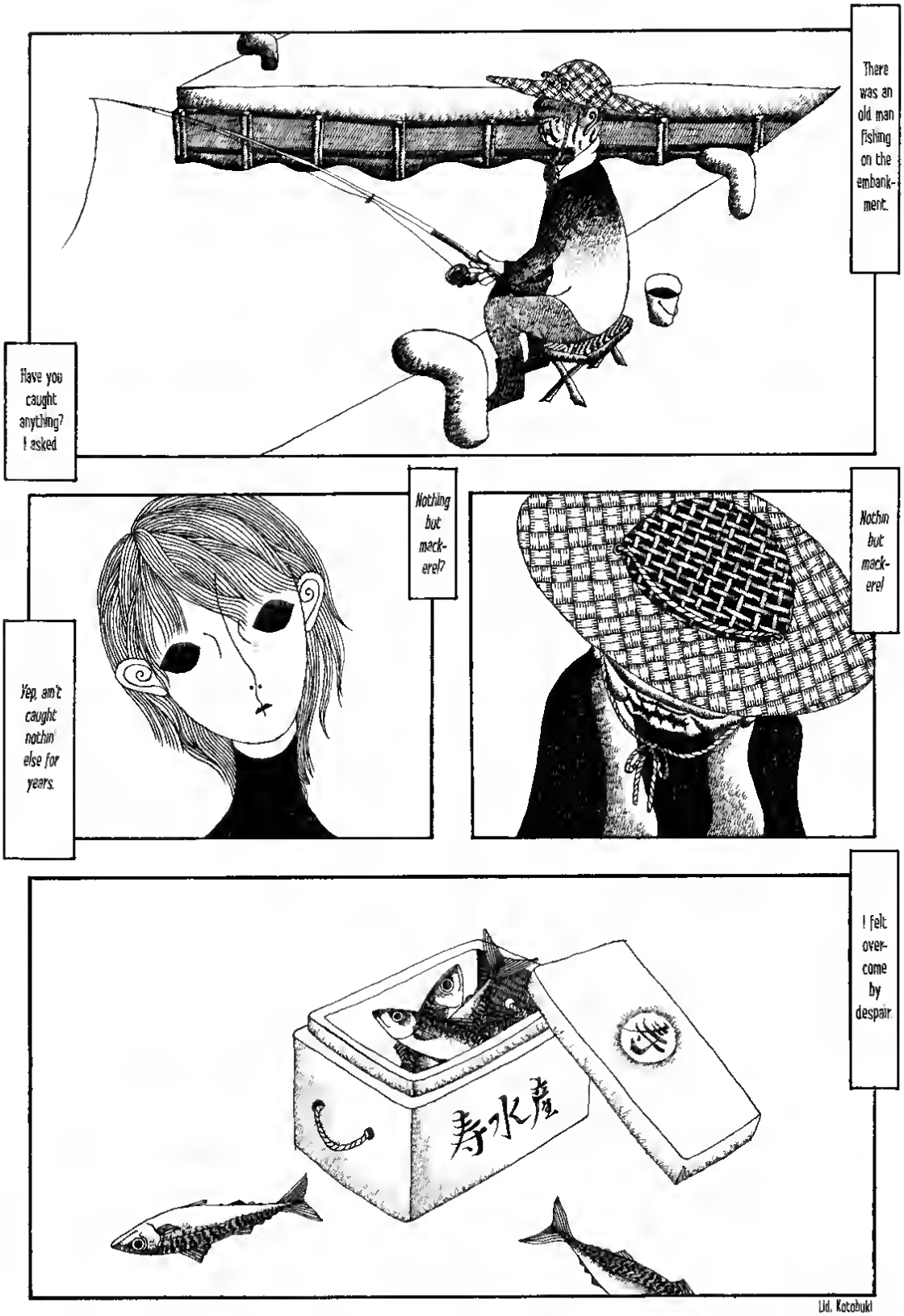
At a glance, it seemed like nothing had changed, but for some reason the town seemed smaller than before...
...as I walked with her through the familiar scenery


I couldn't shake the feeling that I was doing something wrong.
When we reached my parents' house, I felt weak in the knees.
I didn't know how to tell these two old people who had always been so concerned about my career and my marriage, that I had quit my job and was marrying a girl I hardly knew anything about.
Over the hedge I could see my parents, now grown quite old, playing with the cat and smiling with their old-people faces
I had a feeling I'd never talk to them again, and felt very sad.
In the end we didn't talk to them

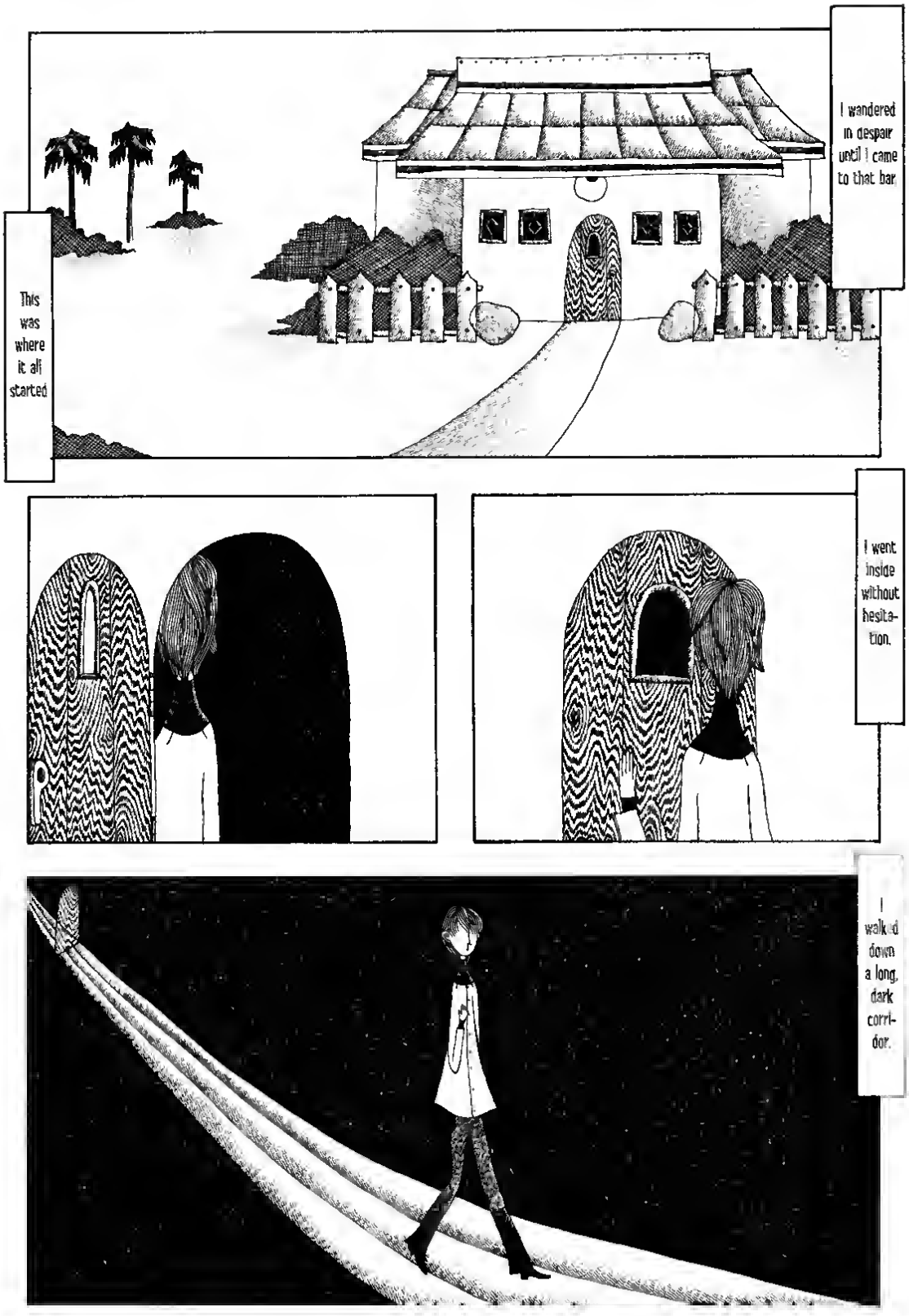

It was the first time we'd held hands.
The two of us walked along the beach.
It was embarrassing.
My palm was very sweaty
Now that I had abandoned my parents, my hometown felt foreign to me
I had come here to fish often as a child, but for some reason I wasn't feeling nostalgic at all.

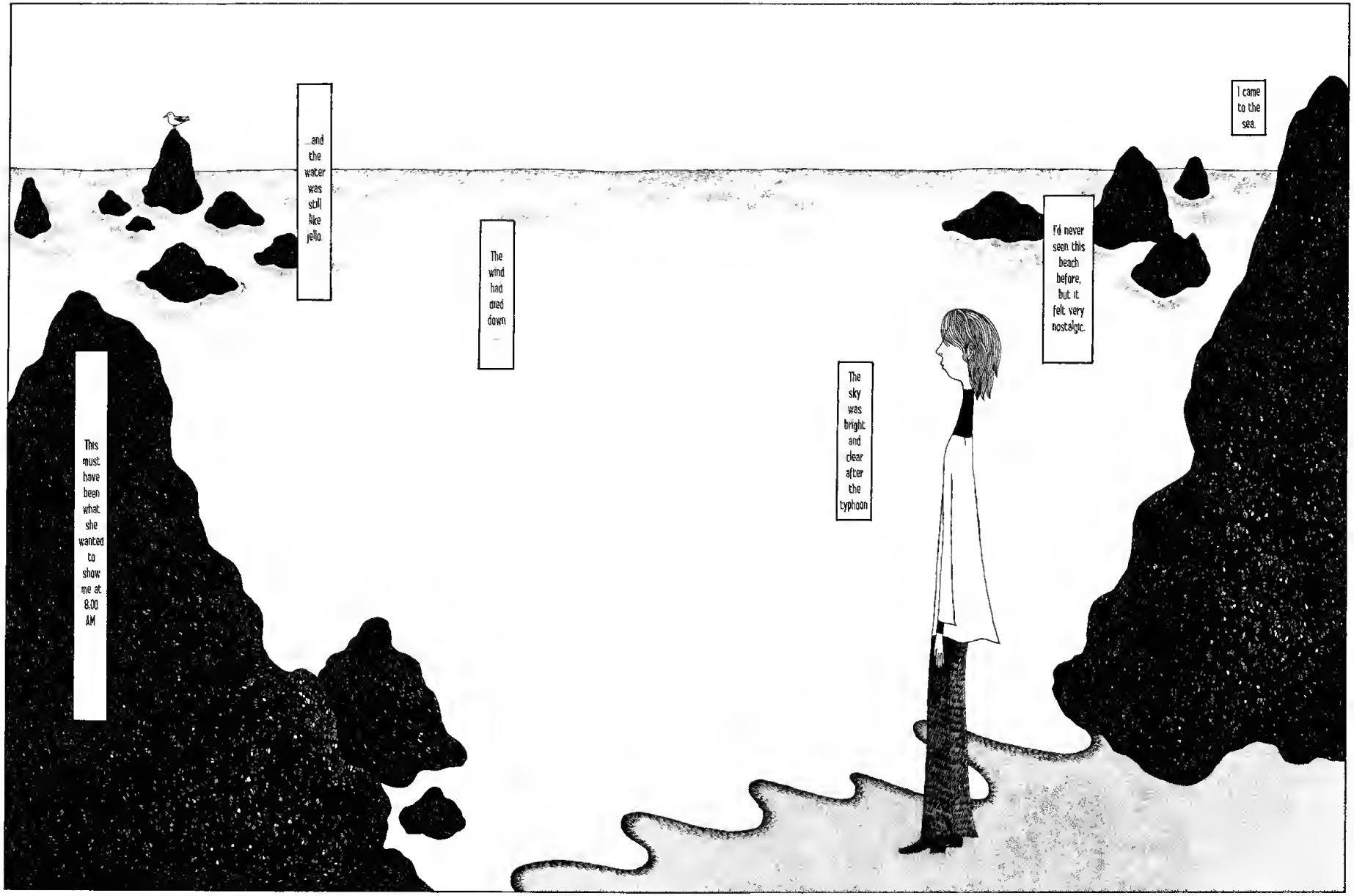

It seemed to me like this sort of thing was particular to people who hadn't been raised by the sea
She played in the surf
For the first time, she seemed lovely to me
I felt like maybe that wasn't so bad
This was how I would get to know her better
When I awoke, she was gone
I fell asleep against a pile of dried seaweed

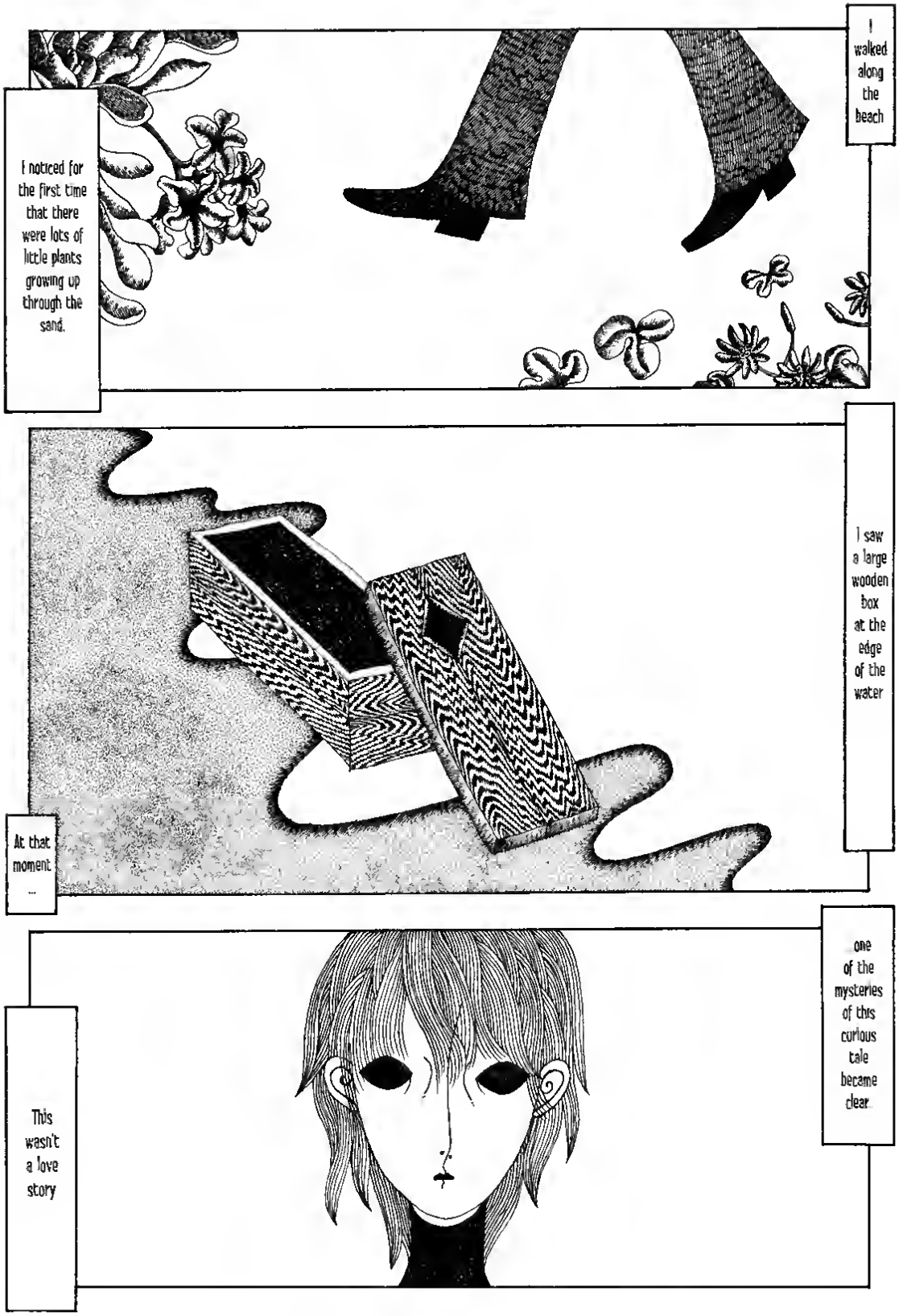

I was worried.
I'd quit my job and thrown away my past.
I thought distantly that I had never felt...
...such attachment to anything
I searched for her desperately
She was all I had left.
She was nowhere to be found.

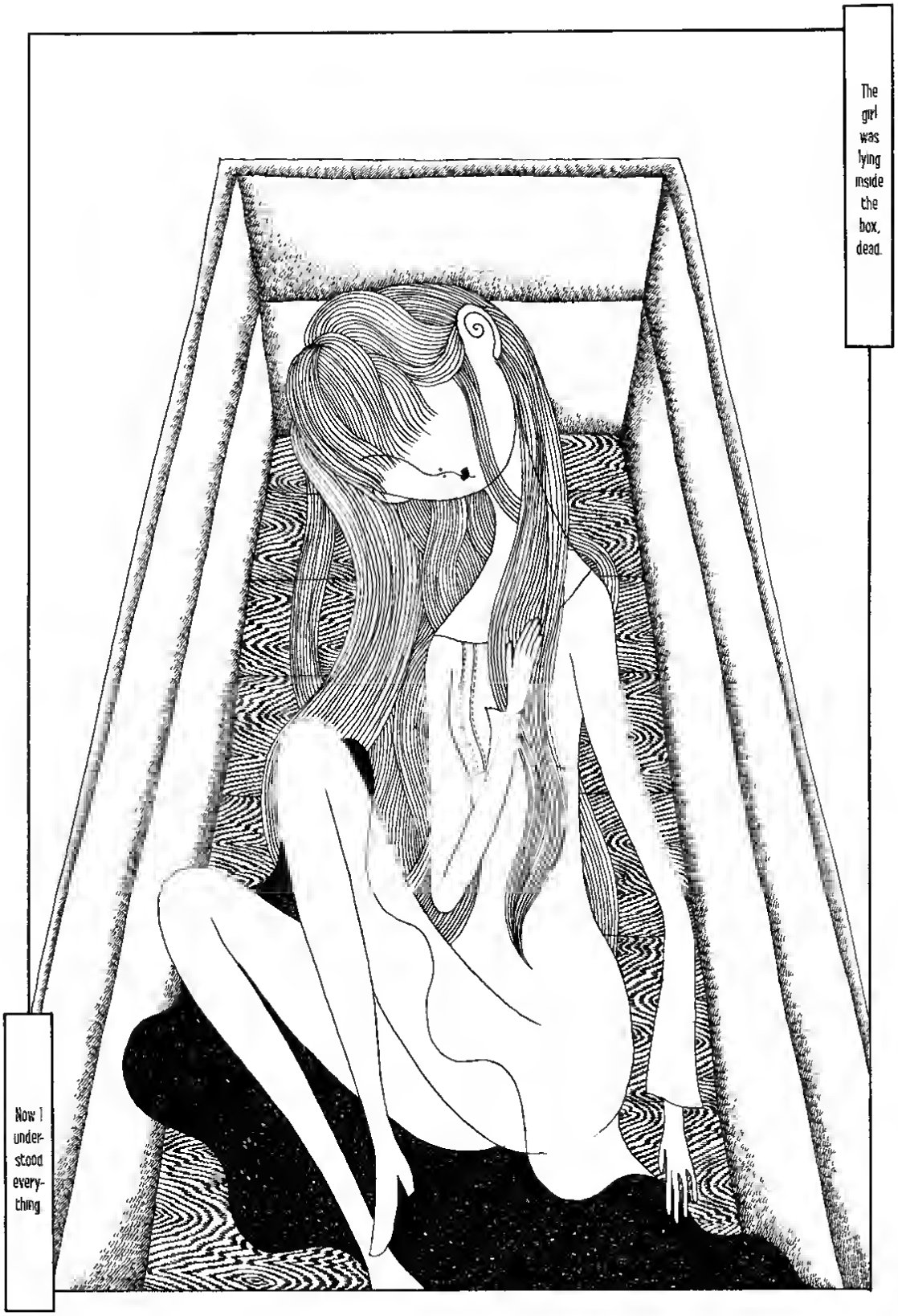

There was an old man fishing on the embankment.
Have you caught anything? I asked
Nothing but mackerel?
Yep, ain't caught nothin' else for years.
Nothin but mackerel
I felt overcome by despair
寿水産

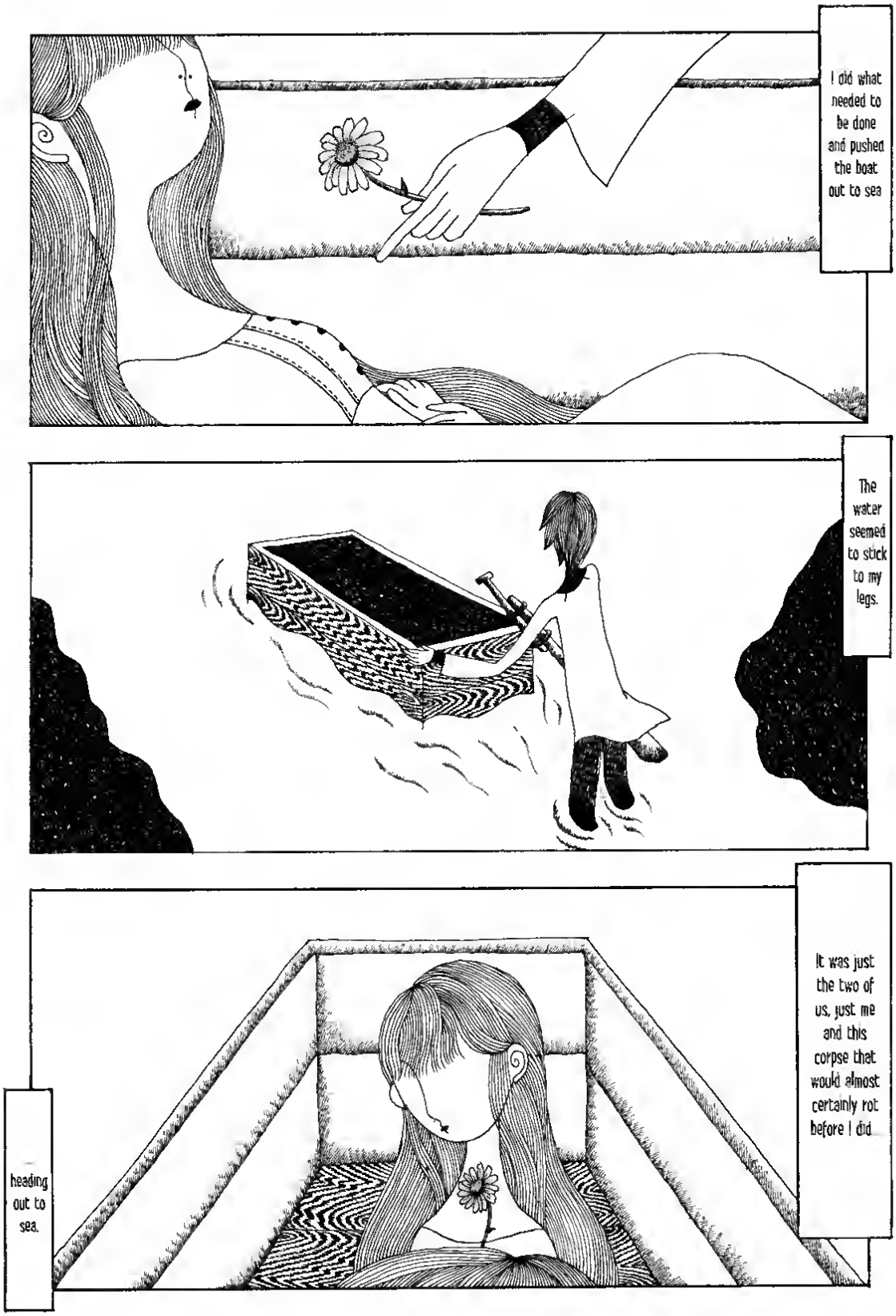
Lid. Kotobuki
Box. Kotobuki Fishery


This was where it all started
I wandered in despair until I came to that bar.
I went inside without hesitation.
I walked down a long, dark corridor.


I came to the sea.
I'd never seen this beach before, but it felt very nostalgic.
The sky was bright and clear after the typhoon
The wind had died down
and the water was still like jello.
This must have been what she wanted to show me at 8:00 AM


I walked along the beach
I noticed for the first time that there were lots of little plants growing up through the sand.
I saw a large wooden box at the edge of the water
At that moment ...
...one of the mysteries of this curious tale became clear.
This wasn't a love story


The girl was lying inside the box, dead.
Now I under-stood every-thing

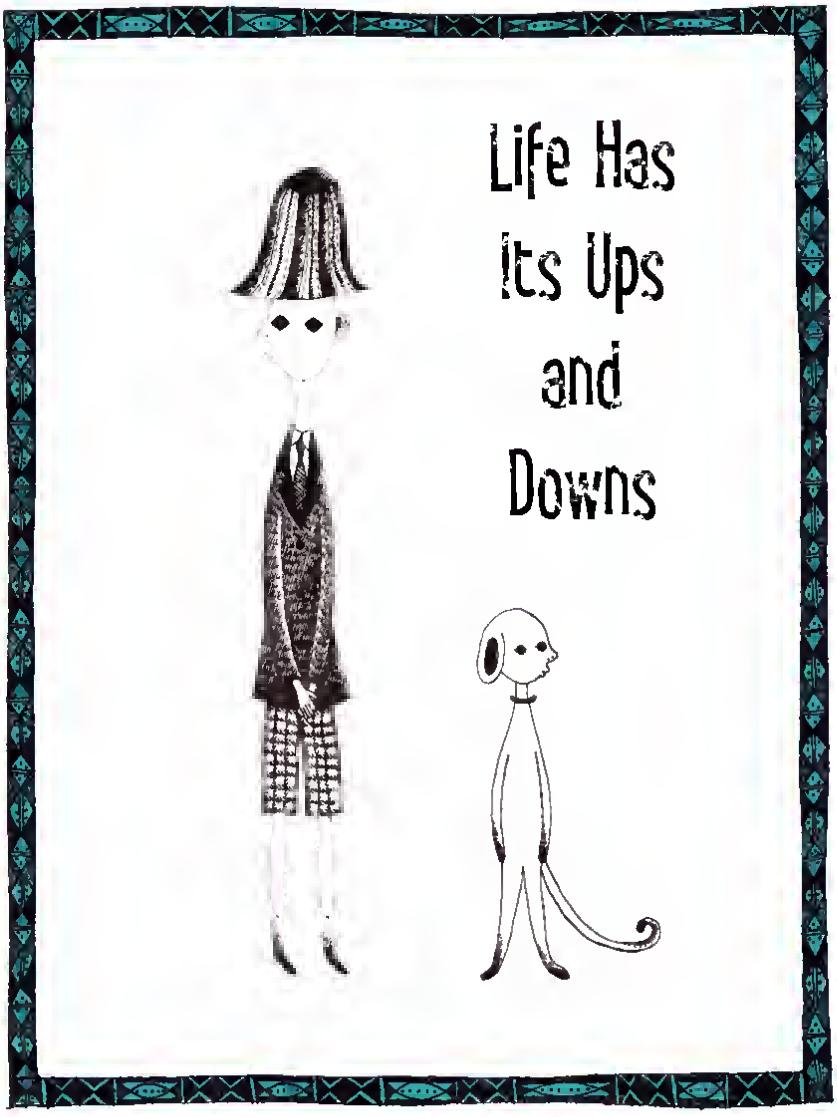

I did what needed to be done and pushed the boat out to sea
The water seemed to stick to my legs.
It was just the two of us, just me and this corpse that would almost certainly rot before I did
heading out to sea.

Towards
certain
despair

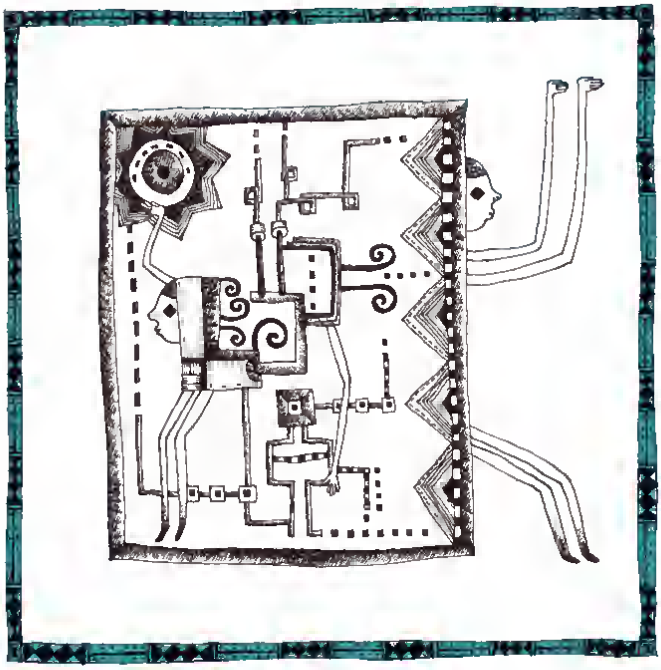
Surprisingly, I wasn't sad

I wasn't sad anymore
Only my heart, somewhere far away from here, was sad.

THE END


Life Has
Its Ups
and
Downs

I can't hear anything.



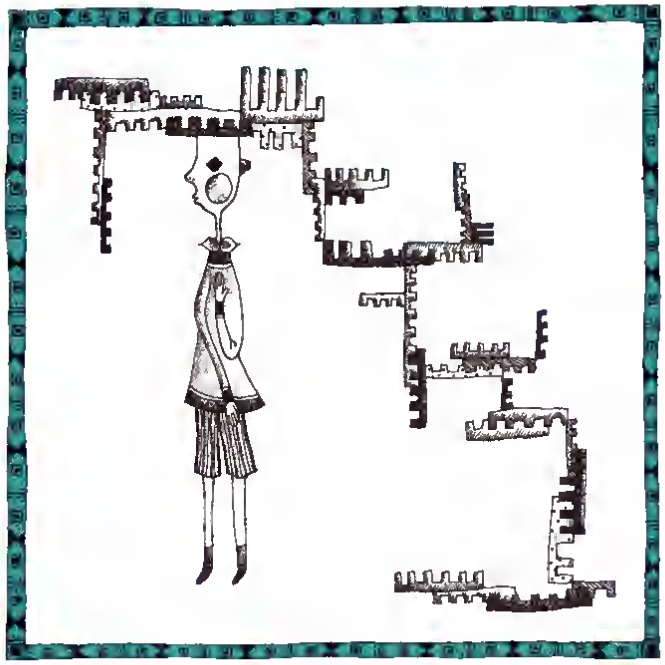
Tick-tock tick-tock tick-tock..

He is desperately trying to grow flowers

Don't go.

Don't dance in front of me

You'll never be happy in there



I can't take it anymore

This is life

No one's home

You can't trust her

You can't really call this a good thing.

I hate it

Yes, I hate it.

I'm not dead.